

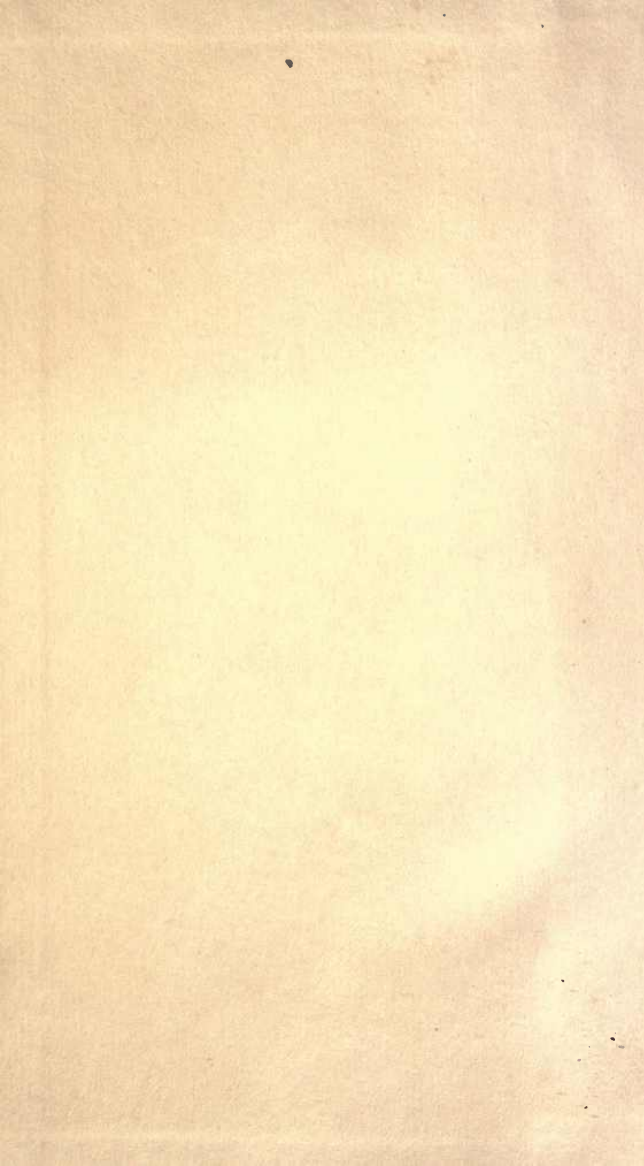
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A
SECOND
WALK THROUGH WALES,

BY THE
Rev^d. Richard Warner,
OF BATH.

IN
AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 1798.

Σα γαρ εσι κεινα παντα.

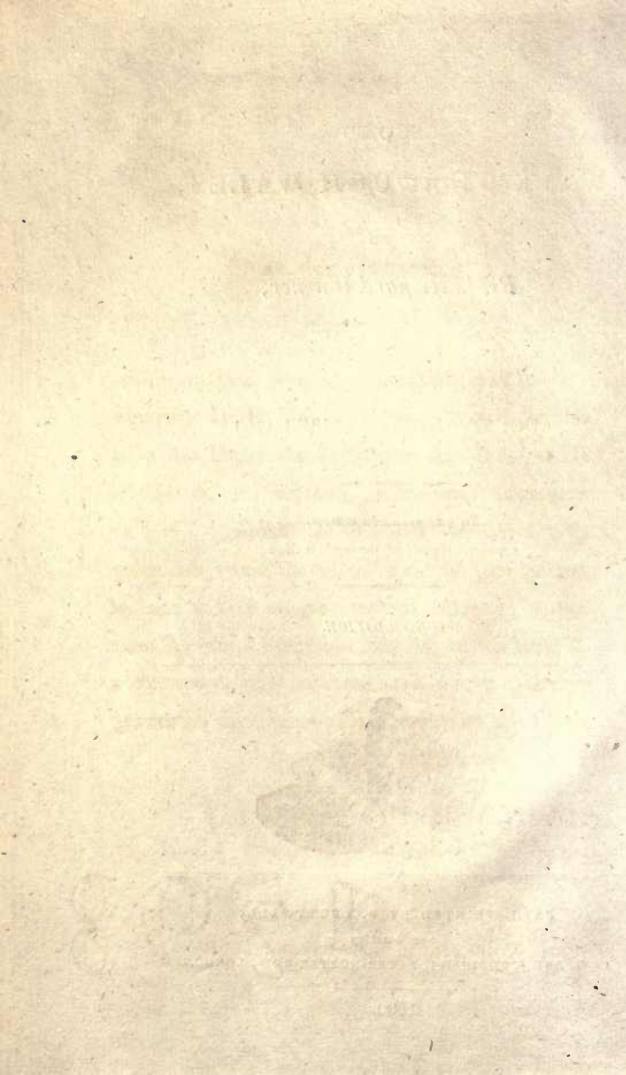
“Creation’s tenant! all the world is thine.”

SECOND EDITION.



BATH, PRINTED BY R. CRUTTWELL;
AND SOLD BY
G. G. AND J. ROBINSON, PATER-NOSTER-ROW, LONDON.

1800.



ADVERTISEMENT

TO

THE SECOND EDITION.

THE flattering, though perhaps undeserved, success the 'Second Walk through Wales' has experienced, in the rapid sale of a numerous impression, induces the Author to offer a second edition to the public. This, he trusts, will be found to be still more deserving notice than the former one, as he has availed himself in it of the obliging hints of some friends, which have enabled him to correct a few little mistakes and inaccuracies occurring in the first edition.

BATH, JANUARY 1880.

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ADDRESSMENT

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

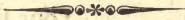
The first of these is the fact that the
author has not only written a book
but has also written a number of
articles in the field of the
history of the United States.
This is a very interesting
book and will be found to be
of great value to all who are
interested in the history of
the United States. It is a
very interesting book and will
be found to be of great value
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the history of the United States.
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and will be found to be of
great value to all who are
interested in the history of
the United States.

CHICAGO, ILL., 1910

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

TO

JAMES COMRIE, ESQ.



MY DEAR SIR,

YOU are aware, that we must not always estimate the friendship of the donor by the intrinsic worth of the gift that he presents. *A mite*, you know, has been made the vehicle of gratitude and affection. In this light, I trust, you will consider the trifle which I now request you to accept; not (to use a legal phrase) as a *valuable consideration* for disinterested kindness and active friendship, but as a token of the re-

gard and esteem I must ever feel and express, for the many weighty obligations which you have conferred on,

Dear Sir,

Your faithful

And obedient servant,

R. WARNER.

BATH,

FEB. 20, 1799.



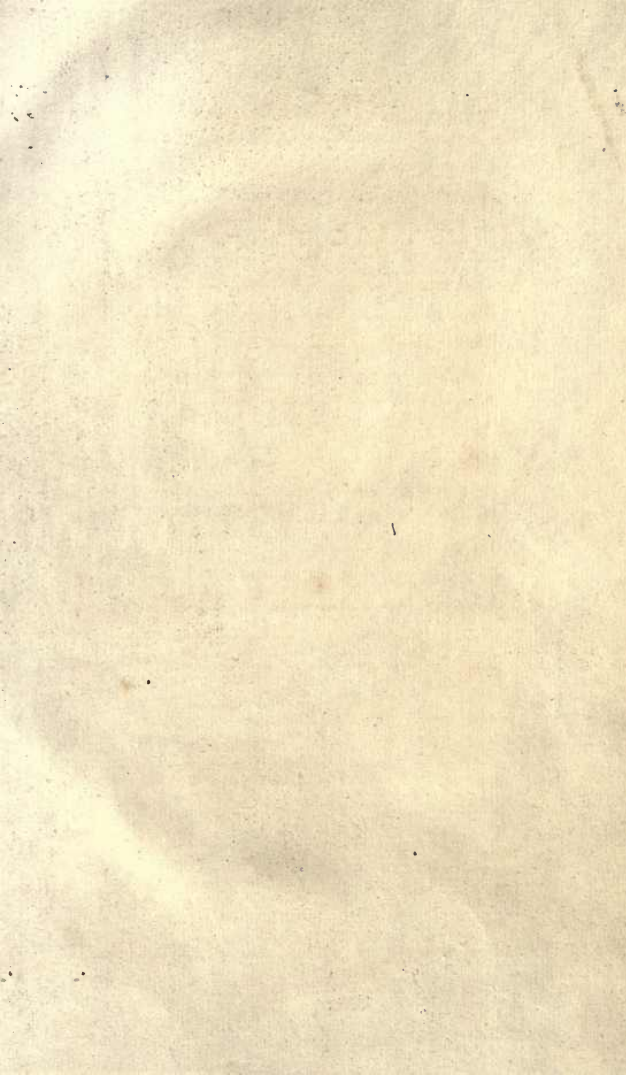
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LETTER I.

To J—— C——, ESQ.

Newport, Aug. 7th, 1798.

ONCE more, my dear sir, I address you from the land of the Ancient Britons. The gratification which I received last year in rambling through a country as remarkable for the beauty, grandeur, and sublimity of its scenery, as it is interesting from the kindness of heart and simplicity of manners which characterize its inhabitants, determined me to avail myself of an opportunity that occasional leisure afforded me, of repeating my visit to it this autumn.

In J——n and C. C——ll I have found companions every way calculated to render the expedition agreeable. The warm, benevolent

mind of the one, alive to the beauties of nature, with taste to admire, and judgment to discriminate; and the spirit and vivacity of the other, who, to the ardour of seventeen, adds the reflection of maturer years, and unites, with a vigorous understanding, the advantages of much acquired knowledge, ensure a society in which I shall find amusement blended with information.

We commenced our journey yesterday morning; but, rather unwisely, performed the first four and twenty miles of it (to the New-Passage) on foot; which occupied so large a portion of the day as rendered it impossible for us to pass the Severn the same evening, and obliged us, much against our inclination, to spend the night at an inn not exactly calculated for the *comfortable* accommodation of *pedestrians*. Very different indeed is the reception which a wanderer of this description meets with, at the houses of public resort, in Wales and England. In the former he is received with an alacrity, and attended with a cheerfulness, that really transfers the obligation from the host to the traveller. In the latter, he discerns the curl of contempt in every face; the contagion of pride seems to

ramify through all the departments of the household, and descends from the master to the lowest menial attached to his establishment; the waiter, when by accident he answers your bell, does it in a manner as if he were conferring an honour by his attention; and the boot-jack himself *looks* as if he thought he degraded his office, by taking charge of your shoes.

Having crossed the Severn early this morning, and breakfasted in Monmouthshire, we took the road to Caerwent, through which the route of this day passed. You are already acquainted with this place, as I attempted some account of it in my correspondence with you last year, and will, perhaps, recollect, that I then gave myself the credit of deserving a *civic crown*, for having, probably, saved an old woman from destruction, who had been suspected of bewitching a boy of the village.* I still felt interested in the fate of this harmless *Canidia*, as well as for the lad who was supposed to have been affected by her spells; and directed my steps to the sign of the Bull, in order to make some enquiry respecting them.

* See "Walk through Wales," part i. p. 15.

Mine host was at home, and immediately recognizing my face, welcomed me with all the cordiality of an old friend. On my mentioning the name of the boy who had been the object of my visit, his countenance suddenly clouded over, and shaking his head, he told me, with a sigh, "that he was no more." Although the uncertainty of life is generally known and acknowledged, and the examples of premature dissolution are so frequent, that no individual instance of it should shock or surprise, yet, I confess, I was much struck at this intelligence; for the mind cannot immediately, nor without some effort, reconcile itself to the idea of youth and strength being suddenly snatched to the grave. Fearful his death might have been occasioned by the injury he had received on his knee, and the extraordinary applications which had been made to it, I hinted a suspicion of this kind. It was, however, very gratifying to my feelings to understand that, in consequence of pursuing the methods of cure which I recommended in my last visit, the boy had quickly recovered the use of his limb, and followed his usual avocations without interruption for some weeks previous to his decease. This fatal event had

been occasioned by a different cause; the small-pox, that dreadful scourge of society, found its way by accident into the village towards the close of the autumn, and after committing sad havock amongst its inhabitants, attacked the youth in question. An affectionate sister, his only relative, performed the part of nurse to him; and, fearless of infection when engaged in this office of fraternal love, she attended his bed with the most anxious solicitude for several days, when the disorder came to a crisis. It was at first judged to be favourable, and the poor girl flattered herself with the hope of saving her brother. Contrary symptoms, however, quickly appeared, the disorder triumphed over her care and the doctor's skill, and in three days from the turn, she followed his corpse to the adjoining church-yard. I requested my friend, who related these circumstances, to point out the spot where he was interred. It was a common green-sod grave, with no mark to distinguish it from the "mouldering heaps" around, save the stalks of some early flowers, which had been planted in the turf by the hand of his sister. This was the last tribute that her affection could bestow. The leaves

had long since perished, and the stalks themselves were decaying, for she had been prevented replacing them at Easter, the usual season of renovation, by a violent fever, which, after a short struggle, united her spirit with that of her lost brother.

The story was a simple, but an affecting one, and naturally introduced a train of serious reflections. I did not endeavour to restrain them, impressed with the conviction that the mind is never injured by the indulgence of a rational sensibility. Solemn thought is, perhaps, one of its best exercises, and produces effects every way beneficial to it; for it has been well observed, that meditation guides to morality, morality inspires religion, and religion swells out into devotion.

We were now upon a Roman road, the *via Julia*, an ancient military way formed, according to Camden, by Julius Frontinus, about the year 80, and supposed to have led from Caerleon through Caerwent to Chepstow. Subsequent antiquaries,* indeed, doubt whether the Romans were settled in Monmouthshire much before the third century, and consequently

* Horseley, Brit. Rom.

would subtract from the venerable age of our road nearly one hundred years. It was not for us puisne antiquaries to discuss points on which the great masters of the school had so materially differed; instead, therefore, of wasting our time in forming conjectures that never could be ascertained, we were busied in admiring the beauties which the road presented to us. For some miles it exhibits very pleasing scenery. To the right the view is bounded by the romantick hills that rise gently from the banks of the river Usk; the stream itself, meandering through the rich and abundant valley to which it gives a name, is a beautiful feature in this variegated prospect, which is further diversified by the little village of Llanvair, and its ivied castle, seen partially through the noble woods that surround them. A wide scene lies open to the left: the coast of Somersetshire, the river Severn, and the extensive tract of flat ground that runs for many miles to the westward along its northern banks. This was formerly called the *moor*, and has more than once suffered all the evils of an inundation. The last, and most dreadful accident of this kind, happened in the year 1607, when “the Severn sea, after a spring-tide, having before been

“ driven back by a south-west wind, (which
 “ continued without intermission for three
 “ days) and then again repulsed by a very for-
 “ cible sea-wind, rose to such a high and vio-
 “ lent tide, as to overflow all this lower tract,
 “ and also that of Somersetshire over-against
 “ it, throwing down several houses, and over-
 “ whelming a considerable number of cattle
 “ and men.”*

As we approached Caerleon our prospect
 became more extensive, and objects of curiosity
 multiplied upon us. Near the eighth mile-
 stone from Newport, the sign of the Rock
 and Fountain

“ Invites to short refreshment, and to taste
 “ What grateful beverage the house may yield
 “ After fatigue, or dusty heat.”—

We availed ourselves of its invitation; and ha-
 ving taken a slight repast, ascended the hill
 which rises immediately opposite to it. It is
 lofty and abrupt, and was formerly strengthened
 by a castle, called Penhaugh Castle, one of the
 fortified residences of the St. Maurs, ancestors
 of the Seymour family. The view from this
 elevation is extremely fine, but few other ad-

* Camden, 715. Edit. 1722.

vantages seem to have attended the situation of the ruined mansion, since it was compleatly commanded by a still higher hill to the south.

The road, which for several miles has been rising, though gradually and insensibly, affords at every step prospects rich and diversified. They now, indeed, begin to partake of the *grand*, retaining at the same time their character of the *beautiful*. To the north, the vale of Usk still displays itself smiling with cultivation, watered by its sinuous stream, and bounded by a line of mountains, amongst which the ragged head of the Skirid Vawr, near Abergavenny, makes a conspicuous figure. On the south, the Bristol Channel presents a magnificent sheet of water, studded with islands, the greater and lesser Holmes, and Barry island; the distant hills of Somersetshire and Devonshire finishing the view towards that point.

Being desirous of visiting the loftily-situated village of Christ-Church, we left the *new* road to Caerleon on our right, (which has of late years been formed for the convenience of carriages, in order that they may avoid the steep descent from Christ-Church into the valley) and took the *old* way through the village.

The elevation in the country, occasioned by an imperceptible rise for a considerable distance, here terminates in a sudden and abrupt manner, and on the brow of this descent the village of Christ-Church is seated. It has little to boast, save the beauty of its prospect, which a very lofty situation enables it to command. An old and curious flat sepulchral stone occurs in the church, rudely indented with the figures of a man and woman, separated by a cross; the inscription running round the margin of it is cut in barbarous letters, and baffled all our attempts to give a compleat transcription of it; you have as much as we were able to make out:

Hic jacent Johannes et uxor ejus qui obierunt anno Domini MCCC LXXVI quorum animabus [prophetietur, probably] Deus. Amen.

Descending slowly from the village of Christ-Church, we approached Caerleon, a town famed in Roman, British, and Norman story for its former strength and splendour. None of its ancient magnificence now remains; tho' some memorials of it may be discovered in ruined walls and fragments of antique masonry, scattered through the town and its immediate vicinity. Time, however, could not rob it of its natural beauties; and the happy situation

in which it stands will never cease to afford pleasure to the eye of taste. We entered the town at the east end, by crossing a bridge thrown over the Usk, a passage that had been formerly well defended, as is evident from the ruins of a bastion, or round tower, on the left hand, probably of Norman architecture. The bridge is formed of wood on a similar construction, and for the same reason as that of Chepstow, the tide at each place rising occasionally to the incredible height of fifty or sixty feet. The boards which compose the flooring of this bridge being designedly loose, (in order to float with the tide when it exceeds a certain height) and prevented from escaping only by little pegs at the ends of them, do not afford a very safe footing for the traveller; and some awkward accidents have been known to arise from this cause. A singular adventure occurred about twenty years ago, to a female, as she was passing it at night, which tells so much to the credit of the ladies, that it would be unpardonable in a Tourist, who is less an admirer of the sex than myself, not to detail the particulars.

The heroine in question was a Mrs. Williams, well known in the town, and living there till within these few years; she had been

to spend a cheerful evening at a neighbour's house on the eastern side of the river, and was returning home, (I presume) at a decent hour, and in a decorous state. The night being extremely dark, she had provided herself with a lantern and candle, by the assistance of which she found her way towards the bridge, and had already passed part of the dangerous structure. When about *half seas over*, however, (don't mistake my meaning) she unfortunately trod on a plank that had by some accident lost the tennons originally fixed to the ends of it, and had slipped from its proper situation; the faithless board instantly yielded to the weight of the good lady, who, I understand, was rather corpulent, and carried her through the flooring, candle and lantern, into the river. Fortunately at the moment of falling she was standing in such a position as gave her a seat on the plank, similar to that of a horseman on his nag. It may be easily imagined that Mrs. Williams must have been somewhat surprised by this change of situation, as well as alteration of climate. Blessed, however, with a large share of that presence of mind, or patient endurance of evil, which exalts the female character so far above our own, the good lady was

not overwhelmed (except with the water) by her fall; and steadily maintained her seat on the board, taking care at the same time to preserve the candle lighted, rightly supposing it would serve as an index to any one who might be able or willing to assist her. Thus, bestriding the plank, our heroine was hurried down by the river towards Newport, the bridge of which she trusted would stop her progress, or its inhabitants be alarmed with her cries. In both her hopes, however, she was disappointed; the rapidity of a spring-tide sent her through the arch with the velocity of an arrow discharged from the bow, and the good people of the town had long been wrapt in slumber. Thus situated, her prospect became each moment more desperate, her candle was nearly extinguished, and every limb so benumbed with cold, that she had the greatest difficulty in *keeping her saddle*; already had she reached the mouth of the Usk, and was on the point of encountering the turbulent waves of the Bristol Channel, when the master of a fishing-boat, who was returning from his nightly toils, discovered the gleaming of her taper and heard her calls for assistance, and, after a considerable struggle between his humanity and super-

stition, ventured at length to approach this floating wonder, and brought Mrs. Williams safely to the shore in his boat.

To the antiquary, Caerleon is a place of much curiosity; you would, therefore, consider us as unpardonable, had we not half blinded ourselves amongst the rubbish of its ruins, and torn our clothes with the thorns and brambles that conceal these venerable remains. Our researches indeed were conducted with all proper spirit and perseverance; but, I am sorry to say, they were not rewarded by any discovery that could throw new light on the history of the place, or make a material addition to what is already written on the subject. Time has been assisted, in his tardy but ceaseless operations of destruction on the antiquities of Caerleon, by the active industry of its own inhabitants; some of whom, stimulated by a principle of avarice, have destroyed or removed many of the finest monuments of its ancient splendour. Within these three years the town has been despoiled of two gate-ways, probably Norman; and the lofty keep which stood on the mound to the north-east of the town has also, since the memory of man, been levelled with the ground. Facts like these certainly

detract considerably from the *classical character* of the Caerleonites, but you will be still more indignant at their want of common curiosity, when I mention an anecdote equally true.

About eighteen months or two years back, on digging a cavity to receive the foundation of a large warehouse, near the church, the workmen struck upon a mass of fragments of ancient masonry; consisting of capitals, shafts, and pedestals of pillars; entablatures, friezes, architraves, &c. The circumstance was communicated to the owner, and some curious person suggested to him, that by expending a little more money it might lead to a further discovery, and throw new light on the history of the town. He went to the excavation, looked at the remains with perfect indifference, and coolly observing, that “thes’em sort of things had nothing to do with his coal speculation,” ordered the workmen to cover them up.

Much of the present town stands within the precincts of an ancient Roman camp, the walls of which still partially exist, though deprived of their facings, and so dilapidated as to leave their foundation scarcely visible in many places. Their form is parallelogramical, and their extent nearly six hundred yards by five hundred. A

little to the north-west of these, in a meadow, a circular depression or concavity of the ground occurs, which is supposed by the initiated to be a Roman amphitheatre; though the profane vulgar consider it as the place of revelry between Arthur and his knights of the round table, and assert that the hero, when he quitted mortal existence, sank into the earth at this his favourite spot. Whatever its former consequence might have been, it is now inferior to many an English cock-pit, and holds out an useful lesson to the pomp of greatness, and the pride of descent. If it be Roman, as many circumstances concur to make us think it is, it would be a *castrensian amphitheatre*, formed by hollowing out the ground to a certain depth and circumference, and then furnishing its gently declining sides with green turf seats to accommodate the numerous spectators, a practice to which the poet of Sulmo alludes.* The mound of earth, called the keep, though probably owing its origin to the Normans, seems to consist partly of Roman ruins; fragments of Roman pottery, and masses of Roman bricks, are

* In gradibus sedet populus de cespite factis.

easily discovered by penetrating into the ground in the slightest manner. Of more modern antiquity, the only specimen which struck us, was the conventual house of the Miss Morgans', having an interior quadrangle, originally connected, in all probability, with an abbey of Cistercian monks, which appears to have been settled very early at Caerleon.*

It may be amusing, perhaps, to recall to your recollection a few particulars connected with the history of this place.

The present name, *Caerleon*, (the castle or camp of the legion) clearly points out a Roman origin. Horsley, than whom we cannot follow a better authority, supposes that the Romans arrived at this spot in the reign of *Antoninus Pius*, about the middle of the second century; and finding it to be a place agreeing in the circumstances of its situation with their system of castrametation, they made it the station, or head-quarters, of the second Augustan legion. In allusion to this disposition of a particular body of troops, they called it *Isca Legionis Secundæ Augustæ*; or *Isca Silurum*, as being the capital city of the Silures or South-Wallians.†

* Tanner's Not. Mon. 327. Edit. 1744.

† Horsley's Britan. Rom. 78.

Here, it appears, the legion continued till within a short time of the departure of the Romans from Britain; since inscriptions towards the close of the empire, and coins of some of the later emperors, have at different times been discovered on this spot.

From these circumstances, as well as from the extensive ruins which have accidentally presented themselves in a circle round the present town of a mile in diameter, it cannot be questioned that Caerleon became, under the auspices of the Romans, a large and magnificent place; exhibiting those specimens of grandeur and refinement which generally decorated a Roman city—a forum, temples, baths, and theatres. The arts, indeed, seem to have been cultivated here to a high degree, as the many elegant relics of antiquity, and beautiful fragments of Roman masonry, formerly to be seen in the possession of different people at Caerleon, sufficiently testify.* But its chief glory arose from the success with which intellectual acquirements were pursued; for if we give credit to the testimony of an ancient author,† we

* Camden, p. 719, et infra. Horsley, p. 320.

Alexander Elsebiensis, cited by Camden, p. 727.

are to believe, that Caerleon was a second *Crotona*, since he tells us (just previous to the arrival of the Saxons in Britain) there was an academy of two hundred philosophers at this place. Excellence, indeed, is only a relative term, and therefore, sagacious as these men of science would appear to be in the eyes of the ignorant multitude around them, they might, notwithstanding, be still far inferior to the scholars of Pythagoras. The circumstance, however, if it be fact, proves that Caerleon had attained to a very great comparative degree of civilization under the auspices of the conquerors of the world.

Even during the times of the Romans in Britain, it appears that Caerleon enjoyed the blessings of the Christian religion. Three noble churches are said to have been erected in it, almost as soon as the gospel found its way into this country,* one of which was constituted the metropolitan church of all Wales. Here the archiepiscopal seat continued till the time of St. David, who, towards the close of the sixth century, translated it to Menevia,† or, as it was afterwards called, from the name of this

* Leland Collect. v. ii. p. 90. † Tanner's Not. Mon. 327.

canonized prelate, St. David's. The deities of classical mythology, however, had their worshippers also, and the great goddess of the Ephesians boasted a temple erected to her honour in the city of Caerleon.*

How long the Roman forces were continued at Caerleon is not to be ascertained. The second Augustan Legion had retired from it, previous to the final desertion of Britain by that people;† but as coins of the Valentinians have been discovered here, we may conclude that it was a station as low down as the beginning of the fifth century.

The enfeebled and emasculated Britons, when deprived of the aid of the Romans, became an easy prey to the fierce hordes of Saxon invaders, who flocked to this country about the middle of the fifth century. Caerleon, with the country surrounding it, fell into their hands, and doubtless suffered severely in the undistinguishing destruction which followed all the

* Camden, 719. This is evident from the following inscription discovered at Caerleon in 1608:—

T. FL. POSTHMIUS VARUS
V. C. LEG. TEMPL. DIANÆ
RESTITUIT.

† Horsley, 78. The Romans quitted Britain about the middle of the fifth century.

conquests of these barbarous tribes. It soon recovered its pristine splendour, however, and under the protection of the British hero, the renowned Arthur, who wrested it from the Saxons after a fierce battle, it became once more a place of consideration. Here it was that he received the crown from the hand of Dubritius bishop of Llandaff, on being elected king of all Britain;* and here he instituted that order of chivalry, *the Round Table*, which makes so conspicuous a figure in the old romances.†

Thus Caerleon became the scene of royal amusement, in which the British dames of Arthur's court were, at Easter and Christmas, entertained with the jousts and tournaments of his hundred and thirty noble knights.§

* Godwin de Præsul. p. 572.

† Drayton's Poly-Olbion, fourth song:

“The Pentecost's prepared at Caerleon in his court,
“That table's ancient seat;”——

And Selden's Note, p. 559. “At Caerleon in Monmouth, after his victories, a pompous celebration was at Whitsuntide, whither were invited divers kings and princes of the neighbouring coasts; with them, and his Queen Guinever, with the ladies keeping those solemnities in their several conclaves. For so the British story makes it, according to the Trojan custom, that in festival solemnities both sexes should not sit together.”

§ The Legend of King Arthur. Percy's Ancient English Poetry, v. iii. p. 37.

A tradition of these revels still exists in the town, and a notice of it occurs in the sign of a publick-house, which displays a military figure, intended to represent King Arthur, and subscribed with the following lines:—

“ 1200 years and more are pass'd

“ Since Arthur ruled here;

“ And that to me once more he's come

“ Think it not strange or queere.

“ Though o'er my door, yet take my word,

“ To honour you he's able;

“ And make you welcome with good Ale,

“ And Knights of the Round Table.”

These jollities, however, seem to have had but an unfavourable effect on the *morals* of the ladies. The fair Guinever, Arthur's consort, and her female attendants, if not dealt unjustly by, were certainly not Lucretias; and the *teatables* of ancient Caerleon buzzed with whispers much to the discredit of their prudence. The legendary tale of “the Boy and the Mantle” is so humorous, and exhibits such a *contrast* (with respect to the *discretion* of its ladies) between the court of Caerleon and those of modern times, that I cannot refrain borrowing it from its very learned editor.

THE BOY AND THE MANTLE.

IN Caerleon* dwelt king Arthur,
 A prince of passing might;
 And there maintain'd his table round,
 Beset with many a knight.

And there he kept his Christmas
 With mirth and princely cheare,
 When, lo! a straunge and cunning boy
 Before him did appeare.

A kirtle, and a mantle,
 This boy had him upon,
 With brooches, rings, and owches
 Full daintily bedone.

He had a sarke of silk
 About his middle meet:
 And thus, with seemeley curtesy,
 He did king Arthur greet.

* This is a more modern copy of a very old poem, scarcely intelligible from the antiquity of the language, transcribed by the Bishop of Dromore from an ancient MS. In the first stanza, *Carleile* is mentioned as the scene of the transaction. It is probably, however, (I differ, with much hesitation, from the learned editor) that this is a corruption of Caerleon; since no early historian, or even tradition, attributes to the former town the honour of being the residence of King Arthur. The old minstrels, it is true, were mostly northern men, and therefore, as his Lordship observes, might, in their popular ballads, represent the hero of romance as residing in the North; but even if this were the case, it is to be recollected, that their compositions on this subject, if not translations from the Welsh, borrowed their incidents entirely from earlier Welsh poems; which most indubitably would never have transplanted the scene of Arthur's revels from the legitimate field of action, the city of Caerleon, to a distant country, and a more obscure town.

" God speed thee, brave King Arthur,
 " Thus feasting in thy bowre;
 " And Guenever thy goodly queen,
 " That fair and peerlesse flowre.
 " Ye gallant lords, and lordings,
 " I wish you all take heed,
 " Lest, what ye deem a blooming rose
 " Should prove a cankred weed."

Then straitway from his bosome

A little wand he drew;
 And with it eke a mantle
 Of wondrous shape and hew.

" Now have thou here, king Arthur,
 " Have this here of mee,
 " And give unto thy comely queen,
 " All-shapen as you see.

" No wife it shall become
 " That once hath been to blame."

Then every knight in Arthur's court
 Slye glaunced at his dame.

And first came lady Guenever,
 The mantle she must trye:
 This dame she was new-fangled,
 And of a roving eye.

When she had tane the mantle,
 And all was with it cladde,
 From top to toe it shiver'd down,
 As though with shears beshradde.

One while it was too long,
 Another while too short,
 And wrinkled on her shoulders
 In most unseemely sort.

Now green, now red it seemed,

Then all of sable hue.

" Beshrew me," quoth king Arthur,

" I think thou beest not true."

Down she threw the mantle,

Ne longer would not stay;

But storming like a fury,

To her chamber flung away.

She curst the whoreson weaver,

That had the mantle wrought:

And doubly curst the froward impe,

Who thither had it brought.

" I had rather live in desarts

" Beneath the green-wood tree;

" Than here, base king, among thy groomes,

" The sport of them and thee."

Sir Kay call'd forth his lady,

And bade her to come near:

" Yet dame, if thou be guilty,

" I pray thee now forbear."

This lady, pertly gigling,

With forward step came on,

And boldly to the little boy

With fearless face is gone.

When she had tane the mantle,

With purpose for to wear;

It shrunk up to her shoulder,

And left her b-tt-m bare.

Then every merry knight,

That was in Arthur's court,

Gib'd, and laught, and flouted,

To see that pleasant sport.

Downe she threw the mantle,
 No longer bold or gay,
 But with a face all pale and wan,
 To her chamber slunk away.

Then forth came an old knight,
 A pattering o'er his creed;
 And proffer'd to the little boy
 Five nobles to his meed:

“ And all the time of Christmass
 “ Plumb-porridge shall be thine,
 “ If thou wilt let my lady fair
 “ Within the mantle shine.”

A saint his lady seemed,
 With step demure, and slow,
 And gravely to the mantle
 With mincing pace does goe;

When she the same had taken,
 That was so fine and thin,
 It shrivell'd all about her,
 And show'd her dainty skin.

Ah! little did HER mincing,
 Or HIS long prayers bestead;
 She had no more hung on her,
 Than a tassel and a thread.

Down she threw the mantle,
 With terror and dismay,
 And with a face of scarlet,
 To her chamber hied away.

Sir Cradocke call'd his lady,
 And bade her to come neare;
 “ Come win this mantle, lady,
 “ And do me credit here,

" Come win this mantle, lady,
 " For now it shall be thine,
 " If thou hast never done amiss,
 " Sith first I made thee mine."

The lady gently blushing,
 With modest grace came on,
 And now to trye the wondrous charm
 Courageously is gone.

When she had tane the mantle,
 And put it on her backe,
 About the hem it seemed
 To wrinkle and to cracke.

" Lye still," shee cryed, " O mantle!
 " And shame me not for nought,
 " I'll freely own whate'er amiss,
 " Or blameful I have wrought.

" Once I kist Sir Cradocke
 " Beneath the green-wood tree:
 " Once I kist Sir Cradocke's mouth
 " Before he married mee."

When thus she had her shriven,
 And her worst fault had told,
 The mantle soon became her
 Rightly comely as it shold.

Most rich and fair of colour,
 Like gold it glittering shone:
 And much the knights in Arthur's court
 Admir'd her every one.

Then towards king Arthur's table
 The boy he turn'd his eye:
 Where stood a boar's-head garnish'd
 With bayes and rosemarye.

When thrice he o'er the boar's head
 His little wand had drawne,
 Quoth he, " There's never a cuckold's knife,
 " Can carve this head of brawne."

Then some their whittles rubbed
 On whetstone, and on hone:
 Some threwe them under the table,
 And swore that they had none.

Sir Cradocke had a little knife
 Of steel and iron made;
 And in an instant thro' the skull
 He thrust the shining blade.

He thrust the shining blade
 Full easily and fast:
 And every knight in Arthur's court
 A morsel had to taste.

The boy brought forth a horne,
 All golden was the rim:
 Said he, " No cuckolde ever can
 " Set mouth unto the brim.

" No cuckolde can this little horne
 " Lift fairly to his head;
 " But or on this, or that side,
 " He shall the liquor shed."

Some shed it on their shoulder,
 Some shed it on their thigh;
 And he that could not hit his mouth,
 Was sure to hit his eye.

Thus he, that was a cuckold,
 Was known of every man:
 But Cradocke lifted easily,
 And wan the golden can.

Thus boar's head, horn, and mantle,
 Were this fair couple's meed:
 And all such constant lovers,
 God send them well to speed.

Then down in rage came Guenever,
 And thus could sprightly say,
 " Sir Cradocke's wife most wrongfully
 " Hath borne the prize away.

" See yonder shameless woman,
 " That makes herself so clean;
 " Yet from her pillow taken
 " Thrice five gallants have been.

" Priests, clarkes, and wedded men,
 " Have her lewd pillow prest:
 " Yet she the wondrous prize forsooth
 " Must beare from all the rest."

Then bespake the little boy,
 Who had the same in hold:
 ' Chastise thy wife, king Arthur,
 ' Of speech she is too bold:

' Of speech she is too bold,
 ' Of carriage all too free;

' Sir king, she hath within thy hall
 ' A cuckolde made of thee.

' All frolick, light, and wanton
 ' She hath her carriage borne:

' And given thee for a kingly crown
 ' To wear a cuckolde's horne.'

Little occurs relative to Caerleon, during that period of darkness and confusion known by the name of the middle ages. It succes-

sively felt the fury of the Saxon and the Dane, and was afterwards alternately in the possession of the English and Welsh. The castle, a remain of which is seen on the north side of the bridge, seems to have been erected about the middle of the twelfth century, if, indeed, it be the same called by Powel the "New Castle upon Usk." At that time the English held the town, but surrendered it, after a desperate resistance, to Jorweth ap Owen, prince of South-Wales, in 1173. On the ensuing year, Caerleon experienced another change of masters, when a large army of English and Normans took possession of it; they retained it, however, but a few months, King Henry II. again restoring it to its rightful owner, Jorweth ap Owen, on this prince and the other South-Walian leaders doing homage to him at Gloucester.

In the year 1218, Caerleon fell once more into the hands of the English, under William Marshall earl of Pembroke, and experienced all the horrors of a complete sacking, the frequent effect of military ferocity in the feudal ages. Llewellyn ap Jorweth recovered it in 1231, and it was retained by his descendants* till the complete reduction of Wales by Edward I.

* See Powel's History of Wales, 201, 203, et infra.

Having gratified our curiosity here, we proceeded towards Newport, a town at the distance of two miles to the south-west of Caerleon. Our walk, which conducted us by a foot-road over the fields, presented a variety of rich views, Caerleon forming a prominent feature in them, happily placed on the wooded banks of a fine winding river, in the middle of a rich valley surrounded with hills.

After an hour's agreeable saunter, we descended towards Newport, and entered the town over a magnificent stone bridge. It is, indeed, as yet, incomplete; but a sufficient portion of the structure appears, to do great credit to the architectural skill of its builder, Mr. Edward, son of the William Edward, who is so deservedly famed for having thrown a durable arch over the rapid Taafe at Pont-y-pridd.

The first object that strikes the eye on entering Newport is its ruined castle, which stands at the north-eastern corner of the town on the banks of the river Usk. There is nothing picturesque in its appearance, though the remains are considerable. Like most of the other castles of South-Wales, it owes its erection to the Normans, and made part of the possessions of the Clare family, the lineal descendants of the

Baron Fitz-hamon, who possessed himself of Glamorganshire in the eleventh century. From them it passed to Hugh de Audley, in right of his wife a co-heiress of Gilbert de Clare. It afterwards fell a victim to the rapacity of the younger Spencer, in the reign of Edward II. just previous to the downfall of that favourite; but was soon recovered by the confederate barons, and restored to the rightful owner.

Newport itself is a long ill-built town, the name of which implies a place of greater antiquity in its neighbourhood.* This is Caerleon, from whose ruins, it probably arose.† It confirms, however, the truth of the old adage, *Heroum filij noxæ*; for if we except the capital inn which is now building, (after the plan of the great one at Pyle) and to which the worthy and respectable tenants of the present inn will do credit, Newport can boast of nothing that bespeaks the *grandeur of its descent*.

Your's, &c.

R. W.

* Quid, quod vel ipsum Novæ Portæ nomen alium locum in viciniâ fuisse innuat se vetustiolem!—*Baxteri Gloss. in Uxacona.*

† De cineribus tantæ urbis (Caerleon) Newport, sive Nova Porta in viciniâ ortus est.—*Id. in Voc. Isca.*

N



LETTER II.

TO THE SAME.

Neath, Aug. 11th.

LIFE has not unaptly been compared to a journey. The resemblance, indeed, is so striking, that moralists of all ages and descriptions have made the comparison, and run the parallel between them. In both states, changes, chances, and accidents perpetually occur; and storms and serenity, rain and sunshine, inconvenience and comfort, fatigue and pleasure,

succeed each other in constant alternation. Such being the inevitable course of human affairs, it is absolutely necessary for the traveller, in either case, if he would pursue his journey in any comfort, to bring his mind to such a disposition, as shall enable him to enjoy the agreeable, and meet the unpleasant with patience.

Hitherto, indeed, we have had no occasion for the exercise of this virtue; our journey is but just commenced, and our hours, like the halcyon days of youth, have, as yet, passed without a cloud. Much of our pleasure has arisen from an accidental addition to our party, the two younger Mr. Th-m-s's, of P—lt—ch, Glamorganshire, who yesterday morning joined us at Cowbridge. Their society has been of material use, as well as productive of great satisfaction to us, since an intimate acquaintance with this part of Wales enables them to point out a variety of minute objects of curiosity, which, without such an assistance to our enquiries, would probably escape the notice of strangers.

We quitted Newport the 9th, and proceeded through a pleasant country towards Caerphilly, a town on the eastern confines of

Glamorganshire. Our walk afforded but little room for remark, the scenery being tame, and the population scanty, compared with the tract we had hitherto past. An agreeable and lively effect, however, in the landscape, arises from a practice, which is become very common among the Welsh peasantry; a great object of their ambition (would to heaven all ambition were equally innocent!) is to render their little dwellings conspicuous, by coating them with whitewash. This gives a great appearance of neatness and cleanliness to the cottages, and at the same time adds to the picturesque of the country; for although a *great breadth* of white, produced either by a number of houses grouped together and whitewashed, or by a large single mansion covered in the same glaring manner, be disgusting to true taste, yet small detached cottages thus coloured, sprinkled through wooded valleys, or studding the broad sides of verdant mountains, produce a relief and contrast in the scenery that are highly gratifying to the eye.

About ten miles from Newport we crossed the river Rumney, entered Glamorganshire, and soon had a view of the town of Caerphilly, and the august remains of its ancient castle.

This place is situated in a broad valley, or rather an extensive flat, and surrounded by mountains barren and dark. At the first glance, after our entrance into Caerphilly, we had occasion to remark the very singular alteration for the better, which had taken place in it since the period of Mr. Windham's tour, about twenty years ago. The town is now neat, clean, and has many decent houses. An easy communication may be had with its inhabitants, most of whom speak English; and an admirable repast, served up with cleanliness and comfort, evinced an house of entertainment above the common run of village inns. After our collation, we visited the castle, and were much struck with the stupendous scene of ruins which it displayed. A minute description of their several parts would not be very difficult, since I conceive the ichnography might, with some industry, be ascertained; but such is their extent, that it would be quite incompatible with the size of a moderate letter. One grand idea of the immensity of this fortress is conveyed to the mind by the information of the village antiquary, who shews the ruins, and tells the astonished spectator that they are one mile and a quarter in circumference, and sufficiently

large to accommodate a garrison of twenty thousand men. The hanging tower, as it is called, cannot be viewed without wonder. It is a huge circular building, with walls above ten feet thick, which, probably, by the application of the mighty force of an ancient military engine, had been torn from its foundation, but, by some inconceivable means found a support in the earth, when, as it should seem, it was in the act of falling; and now remains immovably fixed there, though standing no less than eleven feet six inches out of the perpendicular. The majestic remains of the hall, its beautiful clustered pillars, and the elegant form of its windows, in which the Gothic and Saracenic styles are most tastefully combined, bear ample testimony to the perfection of the architecture of the age in which Caerphilly castle was constructed.

To determine exactly this æra, would be more difficult than to describe its ruins, as no data for that purpose can be gathered from history. There are reasons, however, for indulging a conjecture that the Normans were the first people who erected a castle at this place. That Caerphilly, stupendous as it is, should have been built by the Welsh princes,

seems most unlikely; the petty chieftains, who ruled the different provinces of Wales, had neither ability nor leisure to effect so great a work. The confined limits of their dominions, the scanty population of those territories, which would not supply labourers for such an undertaking, and the poverty of their coffers, that would not allow them to employ labourers could they have been found, seem insuperable objections to the idea of their *executing* so great a work; as their constant employment, either in defending themselves against the incursions of neighbouring chieftains, or in ravaging the territories of the adjoining princes, would as certainly prevent them from *attempting* it.

In the year 1090, as I shall have occasion to observe to you more fully in the latter part of this letter, the Norman baron, Robert Fitzhamon, lord of the bed-chamber to William Rufus, with twelve other dependant adventurers, took possession of Glamorganshire. As he obtained it by violence, he could only hold it by superior power; it became necessary for him and his followers, therefore, to secure themselves in their new acquisitions, and to awe the natives, by building strong fortresses in such situations as appeared most eligible for these

purposes. This is the period, then, to which I would attribute the original erection of a castle at Caerphilly, or, as it was more anciently called, Sengenneth; and as Fitz-hamon retained the lordship of Glamorganshire in his own hands, and the country around Caerphilly made part of his own *demesne*, we may, with equal probability, consider him as its builder.

I do not, however, conceive that we are indebted to Fitz-hamon for much of the present remains. The old Norman castle was completely dismantled in the year 1217, when Rhys Fychan wrested it from the English, to whom it then belonged; and although it was again repaired by John Bruce, the son-in-law of Prince Llewellyn, in 1221, yet the prodigious size of the present structure prohibits the idea of its being the work of a subject. Many reasons unite in persuading us that Caerphilly as we now see it, with its enormous towers, bastions, and walls, was built by Edward I. the conqueror of Wales. Edifices of a similar importance had been raised by him at Caernarvon and Conway, in order to awe the North-Wallians, whom he had lately subdued; and it seems to be but probable, that he would take similar precautions with respect to his subjects of South-

Wales. To the English kings of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the erection of such a prodigious pile would be no very serious effort. By a common exercise of prerogative they easily procured a sufficient number of hands to carry any work of this kind into execution; instead of alluring labourers by the offer of wages, they issued their writs, directed to the sheriffs of the different counties, commanding them to assess in each a certain number of carpenters, masons, &c. who were to assemble on a particular day at a given spot, and carry into execution the royal work. An army of artificers was by these means at once set in motion, fully equal to all that was required of them; for what labour was there that might not be effected by the well-directed strength of such congregated multitudes?

Caerphilly, as I have before observed, made part of Fitz-hamon's possessions. From hence it devolved to the De Clares', his lineal descendants; and by the marriage of Eleanor, a co-heiress of this family, to the younger Spencer, it became the property of the favourite of Edward II. Whilst this profligate young man basked in the sunshine of power and prosperity, the castle of Caerphilly displayed a bril-

liant scene of revelry and show. Surrounded by a croud of idle retainers, who, as they depended entirely on the will of the lord, were bound to humour his caprices, and execute his wishes, young Spencer exercised an uncontrolled despotism through the country round;* and maintained such a system of profuse living, as equalled the expenditure of a monarch. We may form some idea of the immense rustic hospitality in which the feudal chieftain indulged, by the following circumstance relating to Spencer, and the place under consideration. The insolence of this young man, who, with the usual infatuation of a favourite, exercised his power rather in exciting envy and disgust, than in conciliating affection, became at length so intolerable to the haughty barons of the time, that they determined to tumble him from his unmerited elevation, and procure the banishment both of himself and his father from the kingdom. A powerful combination was immediately formed, and young Roger Mortimer, nephew of the Lord of Wigmore, received

* The cause of the barons' confederacy against the Spencers' arose from an act of oppressive tyranny on the part of the son, by obtaining unjustly an estate which had been agreed to be purchased by the Earl of Hereford.—*Rapin, vol. i. 395.*

instructions from the barons to commence hostilities against the Spencers', by making an irruption into Glamorganshire, and despoiling their demesne. The directions were faithfully observed, and these incredible quantities of live stock and salted provision, intended for the consumption of the lord, were, amongst other things, either destroyed or carried off; 28,000 sheep, 1000 oxen and heifers, 12,000 cows with their breed for two years, 560 cart-horses, 2000 hogs, 600 bacons, 80 carcasses of beef, 600 muttons, 10 tons of cider, &c.

Aware of the prodigious strength of Caerphilly castle, the unfortunate Edward II. placed his last sad hopes in this fortress; and, when hunted by his unnatural queen and the confederate barons, repaired thither with the younger Spencer, and summoned his military tenants in South-Wales to rally round the royal standard. It was, however, too late; the contagion of disaffection had spread itself through his own countrymen; the sinking fortunes of Edward operated with the accustomed malignant influence of a declining state of affairs, by lessening daily the lists of his friends and increasing the number of his foes. The king finding this to be the case, and perceiving there

were no hopes of the exertions of the Welsh in his favour, quitted Caerphilly, and determined to escape to Ireland. A contrary wind, however, drove him back to Swansea; from thence he went to Neath Abbey, and was at length taken in the castle of Llantrissant, with the few adherents who continued faithful to him during his adverse fortunes. After his capture he was removed successively to Lidbury, Kenilworth, and Berkley castles, where at length, according to the poet, he expiated, by an horrible end, the savage cruelty of his father, in massacring the bards of Wales.

“ Weave the warp, and weave the woof,
 “ The winding-sheet of Edward’s race;
 “ Give ample room and verge enough,
 “ The characters of hell to trace.
 “ Mark the year, and mark the night,
 “ When Severn shall re-echo with affright
 “ The shrieks of death, through Berkley’s roof that ring;
 “ Shrieks of an agonizing king.”

It was a few weeks after the capture of the king, that Caerphilly made the successful resistance mentioned by Camden, under Hugh Spencer, the grandson of the old man, a youth of only nineteen years of age. The gallant behaviour of the garrison ensured their future safety; for the queen’s forces, finding their ef-

forts to take it ineffectual, granted an honourable capitulation to Spencer, by which he and his followers were secured in their persons and effects. The strength of Caerphilly, indeed, was sufficient to bid defiance to the tumultuary assaults of such disorganized crouds, as the baronial armies exhibited in the feudal ages; when military subordination was so imperfect, and the ties which connected the mass together so loose, that it was very difficult to direct its concentrated force to any one point; and scarcely possible to continue the operations of that force for any length of time. By the terms of military tenure, the holder of the fee was bound to a service of only forty days at any one levy; if, therefore, the besieged could defend themselves beyond this period, they were, in all probability, rescued from danger, since it was very unlikely that an army, composed of chieftains who had their own independent and particular interests to pursue, jealous, haughty, and impatient of control, should be kept together by any common cause, longer than a positive obligation compelled them to act in union.

The scenes which Caerphilly castle have witnessed, my dear sir, have not been of a

common kind; and its history affords much moral instruction. It has seen its lords, at one time, living with regal magnificence, surrounded with dependants, the favourites of fortune, and the delegates of power; and at another time, driven to its towers to escape the rage of their former flatterers; pursued with public execrations; and loaded with general reproach. It has seen a monarch, (the son of a hero) who ascended a throne covered with laurels, and established by conquests, in the course of a few years flying to its walls for safety and protection, deserted by his friends, hunted by his enemies, and betrayed by his own countrymen.

To humble pedestrians, perhaps, these mementos do not *immediately* apply; since the mighty and the great can alone be liable to such singular vicissitudes; but they still have an *indirect* reference even to us, for they check improper ambition, admonish to content, and teach us in the language of the poet,

“ Along the cool sequester'd *vale* of life,
 “ To keep the *noiseless* tenor of our way.”

If, therefore, we left the ruins of Caerphilly without being made somewhat wiser and

better by the visit, it tells little to the credit either of our heads or our hearts.

A tedious length of ascent conducted us to the summit of a mountain from whence we had a good and final view of Caerphilly, its castle, and the country round it. Little else of pleasing scenery occurred till we reached Cardiff at six o'clock, when we reposed ourselves at Mr. Bradley's comfortable house, the Angel inn.

The town of Cardiff is neat and handsome, situated at the mouth of the river Taafe, from which circumstance, it probably, by an easy corruption, derives its name.*

Its chief ornaments are the church and castle; the latter an old Gothic edifice, fitted up some years since by Mr. Holland, the small surrounding pleasure-ground being laid out, at the same time, by Mr. Brown, and occupying the scite of the ancient castle. A wall flanked with towers formerly surrounded the town, of which some traces may yet be seen. These, together with the castle, were built by the Norman baron Robert Fitz-hamon, who possessed himself of Glamorganshire in the

* Caer and Tŷf.

year 1090, an event of considerable importance in the history of this county, and thus related by the translator of Caradoc of Lhancarvan:*

“ About the same time also died Cadifor
 “ the son of Calhoyn lord of Dyfed, whose
 “ sons Lhewelyn and Eineon moved Gruffydh
 “ ap Meredith to take up arms against his so-
 “ vereign Prince Rhys ap Tewdor, with whom
 “ they joined all the forces they could levy
 “ among their tenants and dependants; then
 “ passing with their army to Lhandydoch,
 “ boldly challenged Rhys to fight; who there-
 “ upon gave them battle, and after a resolute
 “ engagement on both sides, the rebels were
 “ at length worsted, and put to flight, and
 “ then so narrowly pursued, that Gruffydh ap
 “ Meredith was taken prisoner, and in fine
 “ executed as a traitor: but Eineon made his
 “ escape, and, not daring to trust himself with
 “ any of his own kindred, he fled to Iestyn
 “ ap Gurgant lord of Morgannwc, who was
 “ then in actual rebellion against Prince Rhys.
 “ And to ingratiate himself the more in Iestyn’s
 “ favour, he promised, upon condition of the
 “ performance of certain articles, one of which

* Powel’s Hist. of Wales, p. 111, et infra.

“ more especially was, that he should receive
 “ his daughter in matrimony; that he would
 “ bring over to his aid a considerable body of
 “ Normans, with whom he was singularly ac-
 “ quainted, as having served a long time in
 “ England. These articles being agreed to
 “ and recorded, Eineon posted to England,
 “ and in a little time brought matters so about,
 “ that he prevailed with Robert Fitz-hamon
 “ and twelve more knights, to levy a strong
 “ army of Normans, and to come to Wales to
 “ the protection and aid of Iestyn. The be-
 “ ginning of the following year they landed in
 “ Glamorganshire, and were honourably re-
 “ ceived by Iestyn, who, joining his power to
 “ theirs, marched to Prince Rhys his domi-
 “ nions, where, without the least shew of
 “ mercy to his own countrymen, he encou-
 “ raged the Normans, by his own example, to
 “ spoil and destroy all that came before them.
 “ Prince Rhys was mightily grieved to find his
 “ country so unmercifully harassed; and tho’
 “ at this time very antient, being above ninety-
 “ eight years of age, he could not refrain but
 “ meet his enemies; and having with all pos-
 “ sible speed raised a convenient army, he met
 “ with them near Brecknock, where, after a ter-

“ rible fight, and a great slaughter on both
 “ sides, he was unhappily slain. With him
 “ fell the glory and grandeur of the principa-
 “ lity of South-Wales, being afterwards rent
 “ in pieces, and divided into several parts and
 “ piece-meals among these Norman captains,
 “ as shall be by and bye more particularly re-
 “ lated. Prince Rhys left issue behind him, by
 “ the daughter of Rywalhon ap Confyn, two
 “ sons, Gruffydh and Grono, the latter of
 “ which was detained prisoner by the King of
 “ England; though the author of the winning
 “ of the lordship of Glamorgan affirms that
 “ he was slain, together with his father, in
 “ this battle against the Normans.

“ The Normans having received a sufficient
 “ reward from Iestyn, upon the account of
 “ their service against Prince Rhys, returned
 “ to their ships, in order to their voyage home-
 “ ward. But before they could loose anchor
 “ to sail off, Eineon recalled them, being un-
 “ gratefully affronted by Iestyn, who abso-
 “ lutely refused to make good to him the con-
 “ ditions which they had agreed upon before
 “ the Normans were invited to Wales. Upon
 “ this account, Eineon was so irreconcilably
 “ incensed against Iestyn, that to be revenged

“ upon him, he was willing to sacrifice his na-
“ tive country into the hands of strangers;
“ and therefore endeavoured to persuade the
“ Normans concerning the fatness and ferti-
“ lity of the country, and how easily they
“ might conquer and make themselves mas-
“ ters of it. But he needed not many argu-
“ ments to persuade a people that were willing
“ of themselves, especially being encouraged
“ thereto by a person of some esteem in the
“ country; whereupon, without any more
“ questions, they presently fell to their busi-
“ ness; and from friends became unexpectedly
“ foes. Iestyn was much surprised to find the
“ Normans, whom he had but lately honour-
“ ably dismissed from his service, and as he
“ thought, with satisfaction, so soon become
“ his enemies; but perceiving a serpent in the
“ hedge, and Eineon so amicably great among
“ them, he quickly guessed at the reason, of
“ which there was no other remedy left but
“ to bewail the unnecessary folly of his own
“ knavery. The Normans easily dispossessed
“ Iestyn of the whole lordship of Glamorgan,
“ the most pleasant and fertile part of which
“ they divided among themselves; leaving the
“ more mountainous and craggy ground to the

“ share of Eineon. The knights who accom-
 “ panied Fitz-hamon in this expedition were,
 “ William de Londres, or London; Richard
 “ de Grena Villa, or Greenfield; Paganus de
 “ Turberville; Robert de S. Quintino, or Quin-
 “ tin; Richard de Sywarde; Gilbert de Hum-
 “ frevile; Roger de Berkrolles; Reginald de
 “ Sully; Peter le Soore; John le Fleming; Oli-
 “ ver de S. John; William de Esterling, or
 “ Stradling. These persons having distributed
 “ that fair and pleasant lordship among them-
 “ selves, and considering that they were much
 “ better provided for here than they could be
 “ at home, settled in Glamorgan, where their
 “ posterity have continued to this time. And
 “ here we may observe, what a train of circum-
 “ stances concurred together, in favour of the
 “ Normans having possession of this lordship;
 “ for had not Eineon, being vanquished by
 “ Prince Rhys, fled to Iestyn, rather than to
 “ another, or had not Iestyn being so vain as to
 “ attempt the conquest of South-Wales, and
 “ to that end consented to the advice of Eineon;
 “ there had been no necessity of inviting the
 “ Normans at all to Wales. And then, the
 “ Normans being arrived, had not Iestyn un-
 “ genteelly violated his promise, and refused

“ to perform the articles agreed upon between
 “ him and Eineon; or had not Eineon pur-
 “ sued so desperate a revenge, but satisfied
 “ his passion upon Iestyn, without prejudice
 “ to his country, the Normans would have
 “ returned home with satisfaction, and conse-
 “ quently could never have been proprietors
 “ of that noble country they then forcibly
 “ possessed.”

Of the possessions which the Normans had thus acquired, Fitz-hamon appropriated to himself the noble lordship of Glamorgan, running east and west twenty-seven miles, and north and south twenty-two miles. On his companions in the expedition, he bestowed less valuable manors, as follows:—

William de Londres, the castle and manor
 of Ogmore;

Richard Greenfield, the lordship of Neath;

Paine Turberville, the lordship of Coity;

Robert St. Quintin, the lordship of Llan-
 blethian;

Richard Seward, Talyvan;

Gilbert Humfreville, the castle and manor
 of Penmare;

Reginald Sully, the castle and manor of Sully;

Roger Berkrolles, the manor of East-Orchard;

- Peter le Soor, the manor of Peterton;
- John Fleming, the manor of St. George;
- John St. John, the manor of Formon;
- William de Esterling or Stradling, the manor of St. Donat's.

All these possessions, however, were held of Fitz-hamon, as fiefs; and the several lords were bound by their tenure to do personal suit and service for the same, in his castle of Cardiff, every monthly court-leet, in token of their dependance upon the honour of Glamorgan.*

Whilst the cook was employed in preparing some *sewen* for our table, (a delicious fish similar in appearance to the salmon-trout, and, I believe, peculiar to the south-western coast of Wales) we strolled round the town, and visited the castle.

On entering the gate of the structure, as we passed the high tower on the left hand, (the most ancient part of the remains) we could not refuse the tribute of a sigh to the memory of the unfortunate Robert Curtoise duke of Normandy, the eldest son of William the Conqueror, and brother of Henry I. who, after

* Hence it is, perhaps, that the assizes are now held at Cardiff twice a year, in spring and autumn.

being robbed of his birth-right by this inhuman relative, was at length confined by him in this tower of the castle of Cardiff for life. The apartment is still shewn, a damp and wretched dungeon, into which a ray of light, just sufficient to render the horrors of the place visible, is admitted by a small square hole cut through the wall towards its top. Nothing can evince the heroism of Robert's mind, or display his calm resignation more fully, than the fact of his spending twenty-six years in this horrible prison: so true is the observation of our great bard,

“ He that has light within his own clear breast,

“ May sit i' th' centre, and enjoy bright day:

“ But he that hides a dark soul, and foul thoughts,

“ Benighted walks under the mid-day sun;

“ Himself is his own dungeon.”

Humanity forbids us to believe what is suggested by some historians, of Robert once endeavouring to make his escape; which so enraged his brother, that he ordered him to be deprived of sight, by the application of a burning-hot brass bason to his eyes!

We were not much pleased with the modern improvements of this place. Nothing assimilates with the august entrance. The neatness

of a nicely-mown lawn, of sloping velvet banks, and winding gravel walks, but ill accords with the roughness of an ancient ruin which has braved the blasts of seven centuries. The old keep, also, rising up in the midst of all this modern polish, looks as if it were ashamed of itself; nor is the veteran kept in countenance by the front of the present castle, the architecture of which can be attributed to no particular æra. In the house are several admirable portraits of the Windsor family, ancestors of the present Countess of Bute, by Kneller and Dahl; and a particularly-curious one, with several heads, by Hans Holbein. The consequence of these respectable personages, however, seems to have perished with them, for their representatives are but scurvily dealt by; being consigned to dust, damp, and cobwebs.

As we had determined to breakfast at Cowbridge, we rose at half past four yesterday morning, and pursued our walk amidst such harmony as amply repaid us for the loss of an hour from our usual quantum of repose. It must be allowed, indeed, that the effort of rising early is, as Boswell has observed in his life of Johnson, an effort of a very serious nature; but at the same time it should be recollected,

that no exertion is more richly rewarded. Is there any thing that can equal the beauty of a summer morning in the country?

“ When the young day pours in apace,
 “ And opens all the lawny prospect wide.
 “ The dripping rock, the mountain’s misty top,
 “ Swell on the sight, and brighten with the dawn;
 “ Blue through the dusk the smoaking currents shine.
 ————— “ Music awakes
 “ The native voice of undissembled joy,
 “ And thick around the woodland hymns arise.”

Cold is the heart of that man who does not feel, amidst a scene like this, a sentiment of gratitude and joy that more than recompenses him for the interruption of his usual slumbers; and he who has not a soul for nature’s harmony, and is, “ not moved by concord of *such* sounds,” would be more an object of my suspicions, than the wight reprobated by Shakespeare, the unfortunate organization of whose auditory nerve prevented him from enjoying the vibrations of the catgut, or the squeaks of a wind instrument.

As we journeyed on, the country around spread itself before us in a prospect of wide magnificence; but it was not till we reached St. Lithian’s down, an elevated spot between Cardiff and Cowbridge, that we saw it in full

perfection. A bolder view of the Bristol Channel was now unfolded, increasing gradually in extent till it lost itself in the ocean; whilst to the right the eye roved over the rich pastures of the vale of Glamorgan. This may be called the garden of South-Wales; a lengthened tract of valley, sprinkled with towns and villages, ornamented with elegant mansions, bearing every appearance of the most productive fertility; and sheltered from the blasts of the north by an undulating chain of lofty hills. With these great advantages, one naturally expects to find the *husbandry* of the vale of Glamorganshire in a state of comparative perfection; a glance, however, at the farms (except such as are in the hands of the gentlemen of the country) is sufficient to convince us that it is, as yet, very far from being so. The land, though remarkably good, and letting from thirty to forty shillings per acre, is exhausted by a succession of crops repeated without mercy, and an impolitic œconomy which refuses a proportionate supply of manure. The Glamorganshire farmer will force his land to the following rotation:—

1st year, Wheat

2d —, Barley,

3d year, Oats

4th —, Barley and Clover.

and repay its labours, perhaps, with only one scanty covering of manure. Lime, which is the natural product of the country, and which the scientific agriculturist converts to such beneficial purposes with respect to his land, can scarcely be said to be an advantage to the Glamorganshire farmer. By his indiscriminate use of it on every sort of soil, he misapplies its properties; and frequently rather injures than benefits his farm, by the mistaken donation. The effect of this bad agricultural system is very obvious; the farmers, though renting bargains from sixty to one hundred pounds a year, on which they ought to make a decent livelihood, are all miserably poor; their diet is of the coarsest kind, and their cellars seldom afford a drop of ale to comfort them after the labours of the day. How then is it, (it may be asked) that a system of husbandry so obviously unwise is not altered, and a better one adopted? You know the character of the common farmer, my dear sir, too well not to give an immediate answer—because he is ignorant, obstinate, and bigotted. Agriculture, though one of the necessary arts of life, and as such, one of the first to which man paid any attention, has made a slower progress towards perfection than any

other. Connected as it is with manual labour, it has been left, till within these few years, almost entirely to those who, from the circumstances of birth and education, are very unlikely to suggest experiment, or adopt improvement. Little gifted with the faculty of thinking for themselves, they are dragged on by the force of preceding example, like their own ploughs, in one straight undeviating line, looking neither to the right hand nor the left; refusing instruction, because they think it unnecessary; satisfied with their forefathers' plan, because they consider it as perfect.

Happily, indeed, the business of husbandry in England has, within these few years, been attended to by characters that could give popularity to any pursuit; and with such examples before them, our farmers have made prodigious improvement in the art. The farmers of Glamorgan will also, in time, feel the influence of this change for the better in our agriculture, since the benefits arising from the improved system of husbandry will be pressed upon them with a conviction that prejudice itself cannot resist. An enlightened Somersetshire farmer, indeed, has already led the way to reformation, by taking the estate of Boverton

(about one thousand pounds per annum) in the southern part of Glamorganshire, where his skill and pains are repaid by a success hitherto unknown in the county.

Though the state of husbandry, and the situation of the lesser farmers of Glamorganshire, be thus unfavourable, we were much gratified with the appearance of its peasantry. The men are strong, sober, and contented; the women cheerful, active, and handsome; the children rosy, fat, and healthy. It is true, indeed, they fare not sumptuously every day; but *their* diet, when compared with that of the *English* peasantry, may be called good living. The Glamorganshire cottages are lett generally at the low rent of fifteen or twenty shillings per annum, and to each of them is attached a small plot of ground for the cultivation of ésculent vegetables. The wages of the labourer upon an average are about fourteen-pence per day. With this, and the advantage of his little garden, he is able to procure for his family bread, cheese, and generally potatoes. The wife also lends her assistance for this purpose, and adds a little to the common stock by the following practice: most of the Glamorganshire cheese is made from sheep and cow milk, a

small proportion of the one mingled with a larger quantity of the other. The milking of the ewes being a tedious and difficult operation, it is consigned to the wives of the neighbouring cottagers, who perform it every morning and evening. For this service they receive no pecuniary reward, but, in lieu thereof, a meal of sheep milk on the Saturday night, and another on the Sunday morning. This they mix with a sufficient proportion of skimmed milk, given to them by the adjoining farmers, and form the whole into a *rock-like* cheese; not so rich, indeed, as Stilton, nor so highly-flavoured as Parmezan, but furnishing a very savoury variety in the meals of those who have nothing besides but coarse bread and potatoes.*

We entered Cowbridge about ten o'clock, well qualified to do justice to the good breakfast which we got at Mr. Bradley's inn. The *butter* of Glamorganshire, you know, is univer-

* With respect to these particulars relative to the agriculture of Glamorganshire, I would observe that they apply only to the *vale* of Glamorgan. To the western extremity of the county, around Swansea, some difference arises with regard to the rent of land, and the rate of wages. The pasture there lets for four pounds per acre, the rent of cottages is about two guineas per annum, and the rate of wages ten-pence per day at common seasons, and one shilling in harvest.

sally famous, and the *rolls* of this town deserve, from their excellence, to be as generally celebrated. Here it was our good fortune to encounter the friends mentioned in the former part of my letter, the Mr. Th-m-s's; a meeting rendered the more agreeable to us, from their promising to be our companions and conductors through the remaining part of Glamorganshire.

Cowbridge, though a neat and handsome country-town, afforded nothing particularly worth attention; we quitted it, therefore, at noon, and descended towards the coast.

Our road for some miles was more pleasingly diversified by objects of curiosity, and presented more agreeable scenery, than any tract of an equal distance we had ever before travelled. About a mile from Cowbridge the ruins of St. Quintin castle occur, so called from its Norman possessor, who, as you have seen, accompanied Fitz-hamon in his Glamorganshire expedition, and was rewarded for his assistance with the fief of Llanblethian. The country in the vicinity of this place, indeed, exhibits, as it were, a nest of castles built by these adventurers, who probably found it necessary to be in the neighbourhood of each other, in order to afford that mutual aid which

the occasional attacks of the plundered Welsh would render necessary. For it cannot be supposed that a gallant people, like the South-Wallians, would sit down tamely under the violent privation of their property. In fact, it appears that they frequently did make attempts to recover possession of it. But as these were only partial attempts, and not the effects of general combination, they necessarily failed; and had no other consequence than the evil one of drawing upon themselves the increased barbarity, and heavier oppression of the domineering Normans.*

Quitting St. Quintin's, we wound down the hill to the small, sequestered village of Llanblethian, which, from the opposite ascent, affords a scene seldom equalled in point of picturesque beauty; and pursued our walk through a most pleasing country till we reached the village of Llanwit-Major, six miles from Cowbridge.

Inconsiderable as this place is at present, be it known to you, that it was formerly a town of great consequence, and made a respectable figure both in the British and Norman times.

* Powel, 118.

Towards the conclusion of the fifth century, or early in the sixth, Germanus, bishop of Auxerre, was dispatched to Britain by the Pope, in order to extirpate the Pelagian heresy, which had spread itself pretty generally through the kingdom. The worthy prelate, on his arrival, began to examine the causes which produced this apostacy from the true faith, and quickly discovered that it was owing to the ignorance and corruption of the clergy. In order to remedy this evil, and to provide proper pastors for the people, he determined to institute certain colleges, where those intended for the church might receive such an education as should qualify them for the proper discharge of their duties. Amongst others he founded one at Llantwit,* placed it under monastic regulations, and appointed Iltutus abbot of the same. This soon became a famous seminary, and some luminaries (such as they were) of the middle ages, received their education at the college of Llantwit.† It is curious enough that a tradition of this institution is still current

* Llanwit by corruption; in Welsh Llan-Iltut, the inclosure or church of Iltutus.

† *Lel. Script. Brit.* p. 63. *Usserii, Antiq. Eccl. Brit.* p. 472, et infra.

amongst the inhabitants of the village; and what is yet more interesting, the *spirit* of it has by no means faded away, since in this small parish, which does not contain more than two hundred inhabitants, there are no less than three schools for the instruction of children.

The considerable walls and foundations of buildings which were visible at Llantwit in Camden's time; evinced its former extent. He tells us it had many streets; but whether they were memorials of its British magnificence or not, I would not venture to conjecture. If Llantwit, however, were lessened in extent under the Normans, it still continued to be a place of respectability, since it thus became the residence of a feudal baron. An old stone edifice yet remains, called the *Hall of Justice*, wherein the lord's courts were held, and those enormous judicial rights (the *jura regalia*) exercised, which rendered the noble, thus privileged, almost independent of the crown. One of these rights was termed *de furcis*, or of the gallows; and vested in the lord the uncontrollable power of trying and hanging criminals. A vestige of this obsolete privilege occurs in the name of a road, called the *Gallows-way*, leading from the

village to a spot at a small distance, where a gallows is said to have formerly stood, and where skeletons within these few years have been found. Under the hall of justice is a strong arched chamber, which, from its name, (the dungeon) seems to have been destined to receive the prisoners who were tried and condemned in the apartment above.

The tradition of the village is, that this building owes its origin to the Flemmings, who settled along the coast of Glamorgan in the early part of Henry II.'s reign, and that one of their chiefs made Llantwit the place of his residence.* This tradition is strengthened, indeed, by the appearance and language of the inhabitants, who certainly do not resemble the Welsh in either point. There is not a trace of the Celtic tongue amongst them, their dialect

* These were the troops which had been introduced into England by Stephen, and called Brabançons, a mixture of people from several parts of Europe; but more particularly from Germany and the Low Countries. One of the first acts of Henry II.'s reign was to dismiss these foreign marauders from the country under William De Ypres their general. Part of them, however, went no further than Wales, and settled along the southern coast of that country, where they would probably meet with a welcome reception from their Norman friends, who had settled there half a century before.—*Brady's Hist. of Eng. vol. i. p. 246. Rapin, vol. i. 223.*

approaching nearer to a broad Somersetshire, than to any other.

Accompanied by the schoolmaster of the village, whose speculations upon the antiquities of Llantwit, and its former history, were not a little amusing, we visited the church. It is a small plain structure, having a more ancient place of worship attached to its western end, though this has long since ceased to be made use of as such. In the former, the only thing worth remark, is a wooden skreen, or altar-piece, ornamented with a number of small Gothic niches, and having two lateral doors for the convenience of the priests retiring to change their vestments. In the latter are two sepulchral stones, one certainly of Danish antiquity, and the other a specimen of the sculpture of the twelfth or thirteenth century. The chief objects of curiosity, however, are to be seen in the church-yard. They consist of several monumental stones of the middle ages, some having inscriptions, others without them, but all ornamented with those gyrations, or lines involuting and intersecting each other, called *Runic knots*, or circles. The two which stand on the northern side of the church, are particularly curious; of these, one leans against the

northern wall, in shape cylindrical, tapering gradually from the bottom, which is five feet six inches round, to the top, which measures little better than three feet in girth, and standing (though in an inclined direction) about six feet high. The face of this stone is divided into several compartments by carved horizontal lines, or fillets, which nearly encircle it, and separate the different ornaments from each other. The upper compartments are filled up with the involutions mentioned above, called Runic circles, and the bottom one is engrailed in a neat and elegant manner. The greatest singularity attached to this piece of antiquity is a groove or channel four inches in breadth, which runs from the top to the bottom on the side standing next to the church wall; but for what purpose it is difficult to conjecture, particularly as we could not discover in what manner it terminated, a large portion of the stone being hidden in the ground. The other stone stands erect in the middle of the northern division of the church-yard, and exhibits a curious specimen of the sculpture as well as the writing of the middle ages. Its form is that of a long square, or, perhaps, more properly, of a truncated pyramid, the upper part a few inches

less in breadth and depth than the lower; nearly seven feet high and one foot thick. The different faces of this stone also are divided into small compartments, which contain a pleasing variety of different patterns of the same gyrations and intersecting lines as the other; extremely well chisselled, and prettily designed. Each front has an inscription; according to Dr. Gibson they may be read as follows:—

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Samson posuit | † Crux Iltuti. |
| hanc crucem pro | ○ Samson redis. |
| Anima ejus. | Samuel egisar. (<i>forte excisor.</i>) |

Purporting to be a monumental column ornamented with the cross of Iltutus, erected by one Samson, for the good of his soul, the workmanship of Samuel the sculptor.

I know not that the date of these sepulchral stones has been ascertained, and therefore do not wilfully clash with any prior opinion by attributing them to the ninth century; when by the frequent invasions of the Danes, and their partial settlement in these countries, the masonry of the Scandinavians had been pretty generally adopted amongst us.

The particular ornaments observed in these monuments, and which I have called Runic circles, were peculiar to the northern nations,

by whom they were considered as endued with a sort of magical power. These knots were of various forms, each particular form having a peculiar virtue attached to it. Sometimes they were composed of segments of circles, their chords and arcs mingling with or intersecting each other; sometimes of serpentine lines, forming difficult and complicated involutions; and not uncommonly of triangles and curves mingled together in agreeable and tasty patterns. Honest Samuel, the mason of the stone under consideration, seems to have been particularly anxious to rescue his friend Samson speedily out of purgatory, by his having introduced into his workmanship every possible variety of the Runic knot,* and combining all its influences for the good of his soul.

Pursuing our route to the shore, our friends conducted us by Boverton farm, a spot which Camden is willing to make the scite of an ancient station, for the resemblance between its present name and the Bovium of Antoninus. No vestiges of Roman antiquity now remain, though Baxter tells us that Camden had seen

* See much curious information on this subject.—*Keyser's Antiq. Septen. p. 465.*

considerable traces of an ancient city there.* The skeleton of an old mansion-house, or plàs, as the Welsh term it, is to be seen, and what is a more agreeable sight to the patriot and political œconomist, a good system of husbandry, applied with judgment, and pursued with spirit, on a farm of several hundred pounds per ann.

Our object in visiting the coast was twofold; to penetrate into a natural cavern in the rock called Rennel's cave, (which, when the tide is out, may be entered to the extent of sixty yards) and to remark the curious stratification of the cliff. The former we were unable to effect, it being high water; the latter we had an opportunity of remarking at our leisure. The cliff for some miles consists of lime-stone rock, of that particular sort called by workmen the *blue lias*; the strata of which are shallow, uniform, disposed nearly in an horizontal direction, and running parallel to each other. The stone burns into admirable lime, equally calculated for the purposes of manure and building.

* Bovium apud Antoninum nomen dedit oppidulo Boverton in Morganticâ Silurum regione juxta quod & Sancti Iltuti fanum est; quo in loco Camdenus noster plurima antiquæ urbis vestigia reperit.—*Baxteri Glos. in Verb. 44.*

Though the cliff do not present to the eye so formidable a descent as the famous one at Dover, in the animated description of our great dramatic bard, yet it is sufficiently deep to excite our wonder at the hazardous practice which is very common amongst the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages, at the proper season of the year. I mean the practice of gathering the *crithmum maritimum*, or rock-samphire, which grows in great plenty along the ledges and down the perpendicular sides of the cliff. Shakespeare, you may recollect, alludes to this mode of livelihood, and calls it, as he well might, "a dreadful trade," for few avocations are attended with so much danger. The method is simply this: the samphire gatherer takes with him a stout rope, and an iron crow bar, and proceeds to the cliff. Fixing the latter firmly into the earth at the brow of the rock, and fastening the former with equal security to the bar, he takes the rope in his hand, and boldly drops over the head of the rock, lowering himself gradually till he reaches the crevices in which the samphire is found. Here he loads his basket or bag with the vegetable, and then ascends again to the top of the cliff by means of the rope. Carelessness or casualty, in a

calling so perilous as this, will sometimes produce terrible accidents. Th-m-s related one to us, which, though not terminating fatally, was so full of horror, that to use a vulgar, but very expressive phrase, it made our blood run cold.

A few years since one of these adventurers went alone to the spot we are speaking of, to follow his accustomed trade. He fixed his crow bar, attached the cord to it, and descended the face of the rock. In the course of a few minutes he reached a ledge, which, gradually retiring inwards, stood some feet within the perpendicular, and over which the brow of the cliff beetled consequently in the same proportion. Busily employed in gathering samphire, and attentive only to the object of profit, the rope suddenly dropped from his hand, and after a few oscillations, but all without his reach, became stationary at the distance of four or five feet from him. Nothing could exceed the horror of his situation:—Above was a rock of sixty or seventy feet in height, whose projecting brow would defy every attempt of his to ascend it, and prevent every effort of others to render him assistance. Below was a perpendicular descent of one hundred feet, terminated by ragged rocks, over which the surge

was breaking with dreadful violence. Before him was the rope, his only hope of safety, his only means of return; but hanging at such a tantalizing distance, as baffled all expectation of his reaching it. Our adventurer was, fortunately, young, active, resolute; he therefore quickly determined what plan to adopt; collecting all his powers into one effort, and springing boldly from the ledge, he threw himself into the dreadful vacuum, and dashed at the suspended rope. The desperate exertion was successful; he caught the cord, and in a short time was once more at the top of the rock.

Keeping close to the coast, and enjoying the magnificent scene which is formed by the Bristol Channel and the distant hills of Devonshire, we soon arrived at the gardens belonging to St. Donat's castle. Having been sadly neglected, these are consequently much out of order, but still exhibit a specimen of the stiff and formal stile of laying out grounds in the seventeenth century. They consist of a series of hanging gardens or terraces, separated by stone walls, and connected by flights of steps, ascending gradually from the shore to the mansion. The castle is a large turretted edifice, loftily situated, but quite out of taste, and built on a very

irregular plan. Little of the ancient structure erected by William De Esterling, or Stradling, (the Norman baron, to whom the lordship was granted) remains; and what has been added since, being built at different periods, form an irregular whole, whose parts are dissimilar and unconnected, and produce an effect every way displeasing. We were particularly struck with the incompatible ornaments of the principal court, (which is of a polygonal shape, and disproportionately low) small round recesses in the faces of the walls, having within them the busts of Roman Emperors and Empresses in *terra cotta*, appearing to have been formerly sumptuously painted and gilt. The most ancient building connected with the castle is the look-out tower, which rises to a great height, a little to the west of the castle, on the other side of a deep ravine, forming the defence of the castle towards that point. The little church of St. Donat's is now almost hidden in this quiet, beautiful, and picturesque glen.

Our associates, the Th-m-s's, procured us a view of the inside of the castle, through the favour of a clergyman, who is one of its inhabitants; for two or three families reside within its walls. There is little curiosity here, except

the ornaments of the state apartments, which are fitted up with the heavy wood-work so much in vogue in Elizabeth and James I.'s time. We were, however, not the less indebted to the civility of the gentleman who conducted us through the building, and congratulated ourselves on the very different reception which *we* had received, from that of a *fellow-pedestrian*, who visited St. Donat's amongst the other remarkables of Glamorganshire, about six weeks ago.

This gentleman, who was alone, and accoutred in a manner similar to ourselves, had taken, it seems, nearly the same route with us, and being a man of much curiosity, his enquiries and observations had been very particular and minute. The disturbances in Ireland were at this time at their height, and the co-operations of the French with the rebels being hourly expected, the minds of the Welsh peasantry (who are very anti-gallican) had been filled with an unusual agitation and alarm; which rendered them suspicious of every person whose appearance was at all questionable, and character not perfectly known. Our traveller, unfortunately, to the peculiarities of his dress, and his extreme curiosity, added that

alarming symptom of an incendiary, a *black crop*, and therefore, it is not to be wondered at if he excited to a great degree the suspicion of the good folks of Llantwit. Probably, however, it would not have burst into action, had not their fears been increased by the information of an old woman from St. Donat's castle, who, big with terror, posted over to Llantwit, and assured its inhabitants, that a fierce-looking fellow, with a pack at his back, a huge staff in his hand, and with several other singularities about him, had been taking plans of the castle, and pumping her for information respecting it; that he was even now concealed in the fields of its neighbourhood, that she had every reason to think he was a *spy*, and knew from his tongue he must be an Irishman. This was enough to set the whole village in a flame. The old lady's sagacious conjectures of the spy and the Irishman naturally suggested a third idea, of his being *Bagnel Harvey*, who at that time was said to have escaped to Wales. Men, women, boys, and girls, to the amount of seventy or eighty, instantly prepared themselves for a pursuit; and armed with muskets and pitchforks, sticks and staves, took the road to St. Donat's. The corn at the time happened

to be high, and it was natural to suppose the object of their search might be concealed amongst it. Regardless of the crop, therefore, the whole party swept the wheat-fields, dashed through the oats, and prostrated the barley; but without success. One of them at length, gifted with particular keen organs of sight, pointed out an object in the midst of a wheat-field, which he affirmed to be a man. Another corroborated the assertion, by swearing he saw it move; and the whole corps were soon convinced that it could be no other than the Hibernian outlaw. The *musqueteers*, therefore, drew up in front, and approaching within one hundred yards of the object, discharged at once a tremendous volley upon it. Down tumbled the unfortunate victim, and forward rushed the valorous troop to secure their quarry; when, to their unspeakable astonishment, mortification, and confusion, they discovered on reaching it, that they had not levelled the formidable Bagnel, but their powder and shot had been thrown away upon a harmless *scare-crow*, stuck up by the provident farmer to frighten the rooks and magpies from his wheat. Quite ashamed of their mistake, the party had no heart to follow the steps of our pedestrian far-

ther, who, unconscious of the universal agitation he produced, had made a sketch of the castle, and was quietly sauntering on to Pyle.

We were much inclined to give great credit to the heroes of Llantwit for their *active loyalty*, on this occasion, though it had been somewhat misplaced, till Th-m-s shrewdly observed, that as it was known one thousand pounds had been offered for the capture of the Irish rebel either alive or dead, it was *probable* their zeal might be *partly* owing to a *less patriotic* principle.

In our way to the turnpike-road, we passed a farm, which, both from its name and other circumstances, led us to imagine it might have been the scene of some desperate contest in distant times. It is called Lechmore, a word composed of two Saxon ones, signifying the *marsh of carcasses*.* Tumuli, or *tumps*, as they are termed in Glamorganshire, have been opened in a large field belonging to the farm, called Hundred-Acres, which were found to contain human skeletons. They probably are burial-places of chieftains, who fell in an engagement between the Britons and Saxons;

* Nominum Locorum Explicat. in voc. Lichfield ad Calc. Saxon. Chron.

in which the latter seem to have had the advantage, by imposing on the spot a name composed of Saxon words, allusive to the bloody consequence of the battle.

The waning day would not permit us to visit the small town of Eweny, its ancient church, and ruined priory; we therefore took the turnpike-road to Pyle-Inn, which we reached in time to secure most comfortable accommodation.

This magnificent house of public entertainment was built of late years by Mr. Talbot, of Penrise Castle, upon a plan large and convenient. It stands quite alone, in a beautiful country, and has therefore the quiet of retirement, with all the advantage of extensive accommodation. The house makes up forty beds, but even this number is insufficient for the company who resort to it; for a gentleman of a party which reached it after ourselves, was under the necessity of sleeping last night on a sofa. The small pleasure-grounds behind the house are laid out with taste and neatness.

Our journey of to-day commenced with a visit to Kynfig Lake, a pool of fresh water, surrounded by the sands, about a mile and a half in circumference. At one end are the ruins of a small castle, said to have been the residence

of Fitz-hamon, but probably without foundation, as the conqueror of Glamorganshire would have chosen a better situation, and a larger mansion. Equally void of credit is the popular tradition of a city having formerly stood on the spot which the lake now occupies; this is a fable common to many places, of which the famous Brecon-Meer, near Llansanfrayd, is an instance; where, it is said, a great tower (supposed by Camden to be *Loventium*) was in times of old completely swallowed up. The formation of a lake in the situation of Kynfig Pool, is difficult to account for, unless we have recourse to some secondary cause, such as an earthquake, or the falling in or giving way of the superficial crust of earth, by the absorption of its foundations into some immense cavity or inferior gulph, after being sapped and undermined by subterraneous waters;—an opinion which the least knowledge of geology will render very probable.

Leaving the coast, we soon reached Margam, a place of much resort, both on account of the beauty of its situation and of several striking objects of artificial curiosity. A noble hill of great length and considerable height rises to the north, and completely shelters it from the

cold winds of that quarter. This proud elevation is beautifully covered from top to bottom with trees, which grow so uniformly, their heads bending from the sea-breeze and taking a northerly inclination, that they really exhibit the neat appearance of a well-clipped hedge. This circumstance gave rise to a pleasant mistake of a sagacious citizen of Bristol, who, in surveying the beauties of Margam, expressed his delight at the *nice manner* in which the wood of the mountain was trimmed and *sheered*; but observed, at the same time, the keeping of it in such *constant order*, must be attended with *considerable expence*.

A lofty wall surrounds the buildings of Margam park, to protect the remains of ancient, and the specimens of modern art from public pillage. The gardener, however, attends to conduct company through the place. Its most remarkable features are the ruins of the old priory, and the sumptuous green-house built by Mr. Talbot, for the reception of his orange-trees. A curious, and we thought, an unpleasant, effect arises on entering the place, from the contiguity of edifices, built in stiles of architecture so completely dissimilar as the chapter-house and the green-house; the one a

simple Gothic structure, the other a splendid classical building. The emotions excited by the former are destroyed by the latter, and the mind is consequently perplexed with contradictory and incompatible ideas. It concerned us to see the beautiful circular chapter-house in a state of dilapidation, that must speedily reduce it to a heap of ruins; great part of the roof has fallen in, the ribs which support the remaining portion are giving way, and no care seems to be taken to repair what is already dilapidated, or to prevent future injuries. This chapter-house, and some unintelligible ruins adjoining it, are all that remain of the once-famous abbey of Margam, a Cistercian house founded by Robert earl of Gloucester, grandson to Fitz-hamon, A. D. 1147.

On entering the green-house, we were immediately struck with the want of a due *proportion* between the length, breadth, and height of it. Every beauty is destroyed by an utter defiance of all its rules, for it is impossible there can be any beauty in a room one hundred and nine yards long, and only twenty-seven yards broad. It must be recollected, however, that the green-house was built for a particular purpose, to receive a fine collection of orange-trees, so numerous as rendered an unusual extension

of the edifice necessary. During the summer the orange-trees are removed into the open air, so that we saw the green-house under the disadvantage of its being empty, which rendered the want of symmetry still more striking. At each of the extremities of this structure is a small room, containing a collection, not large but well chosen, of ancient marbles, and models of ancient buildings. Amongst the former we were particularly pleased with the figure of a fawn, a most exquisite piece of sculpture; in his hands he has a *fistula*, on which he appears to have been playing; something, however, attracts his attention, and calls up an expression of archness in his countenance of inimitable excellence. Over his shoulders is thrown a panther's skin. A little Harpocrates amused us much; the workmanship, indeed, is not so fine as that of the former; but a ridiculous mistake has been made by some modern repairer of statues: the right hand is raised towards the chin, and the forefinger of it originally pointed to the lip, as an emblem of silence;* this having, however, been broken off, the modern sculptor, ignorant of the character of the deity, has turned the forefinger

* Harpocrates autem manu silentium indicit, indice oris ad-moto.—*Augustini Dial. Antiq.* iii. 47.

down, and added a bunch of grapes to his left hand; thus converting the god of silence into an infant Bacchus. A fine colossal bust of Pallas, in Parian marble, is deservedly an object of admiration; but it receives no additional beauty from the ancient Roman *Galea*, which is injudiciously fixed on her head. There are, also, two beautiful sepulchral altars formed of the same costly materials; one about eighteen inches high, in commemoration of a *Libertus*, or freedman, ornamented with most exquisite sculpture, and bearing, on one of its faces, the following inscription:—

D. M.
T. FLAVIO
AVG. LIB.
NEREO
RROC
VAL XXXXVIII.

The other thirty inches high, the affectionate tribute of a widow, to the memory of her departed husband and child:—

LVCCEIA. HEBENE
SE. VIVA. FECIT
DIS. MANIBVS.
M. LVCCEIO OPTATO
COIVGI. SVO PISSIMO ET
LVCCEIAE POSSILLAE
FILIAE SVAE PISSIMAE QVAE
VIXIT ANNOS V ET MENS. III.

We admired, besides, many other specimens of ancient and modern art; several fine porphyry vases, two of white marble and great size; exquisite copies of originals on the continent; a vast model of the *Colosseum* in pumice-stone; a temple at Tivoli in cork; another of the triumphal arch of Titus of the same materials, &c. &c.

The small shrubbery or pleasure-ground, to the west of the building, is designed with taste. In the centre is an artificial pond, round which are placed, during the summer months, the tubs containing the orange-trees. The largest of them may be about fifteen feet high; and appear to be very vigorous and productive.

It was with regret that we left Margam, which may really be considered as a cabinet of curiosities, combining so large a number of beauties, natural and artificial, as seldom fall to the lot of any one place. Our admiration, however, was equalled by surprize at finding a spot with such singular advantages, without a residence upon it.

In walking to the church, we saw another fine Runic monument, elaborately decorated with the knots and involutions before-mentioned. It stands on a pedestal leaning

against the wall of a cottage, and bears an inscription, which we were unable to decypher. A good specimen of the Anglo-Norman architecture occurs in the western front of the church, but the inside of it is plain, and unadorned. The dilapidated chapel at the eastern end contains four table monuments of marble, with cumbent figures on them of branches of the Mansel family; three of the sixteenth century, and one with Sir Lewis Mansel and his lady, dated 1638, and finely executed. It is to be lamented, that the want of attention to the roof of the chapel will quickly occasion the destruction of these monuments. The ceiling has fallen in upon them, and the figures, which are of gypsum, have already received much injury.

We again took the road towards the coast, and soon reached Aberavon, situated, as its name imports, at the mouth of a river.* Our object was the great copper-works at this place, belonging to the Bristol company.

The ore, manufactured here into pig-copper, is chiefly brought from Cornwall, having been previously stamped, picked, and dressed; in

* *Aber*, harbour or mouth; and *avon*, the British appellation for river.

other words, reduced to nodules, and freed from every heterogeneous substance, with which, in its crude state, the metal is combined. It is then put into the furnace, and exposed to a certain degree of heat, in order to deprive it of its arsenic. This goes off by volatilization, a process which it is easy to discover by the powerful smell of garlic that attends it. The matter, thus divested of arsenic, is exposed to another more intense heat; this is called a *roasting*, and here it is freed of the sulphur united with it, and which the force of the first heat was not sufficient to dissipate. As the copper, however, abounds more or less with this substance, it is necessary to repeat the progress of *roasting* in proportion to the quantity of the concomitant; which is done from five to fifteen times. During the latter fusions, the copper gradually and perceptibly increases its purity, till at length being let out of the furnace, when completely liquified, it flows, together with its *scoria*, into moulds prepared to receive it, and formed of sifted earth. There it is suffered to cool, and on inspection part of the mass is found to be *pure metal*; another proportion *scoria*, to which some copper is united; and a third part *refuse*, from which

no metal can be extracted. The second substance is again submitted to the furnace, and after other fusions it yields all the metal which had hitherto attached to it. The pigs of copper, thus produced, are sent to the manufacturers to be prepared for the numberless uses to which it is applied.

A mile from Aberavon, our road led us through the small village of Baglan, a place of the most romantic beauty. The country indeed from hence to Neath, about three miles, exhibits an uncommon variety of striking scenery.

We acknowledged, however, Britton ferry (so called from there being a passage across the Neath river at this place) excelled every other spot, since all the features, which constitute beautiful landscape, are here concentrated—mountain and dale, wood and water, rock and lawn. To the east and north rise lofty hills covered with timber; the Bristol channel spreads itself in front; and to the west Neath river rolls its silver waters through banks fringed with trees to the edge of the stream. The sun, sinking slowly to his place of repose, decorated the scene with a thousand different tints. The groves echoed with har-

mony; not even a breeze disturbed the glassy face of the deep; all nature seemed at peace; and inspired that absence of painful emotion, that holy calm of soul, which the disciple of Epicurus justly considered as the nearest approach the mind could make to supreme felicity. It was with some difficulty we could drag J——n from a spot which seemed to have seized upon his imagination with peculiar force; and we detected our young classical friend in whispering an invitation to his Galatea, to the romantic beauties of Britton ferry.

“ Hic ades, ô Galatea!—

“ Hic ver purpureum, varios hic flumina circum

“ Fundit humus flores: hic candida populus antro

“ Imminet, et lentæ texunt umbracula vites.”

Lord Vernon has a small but elegant retreat here, and adjoining to his house the church of the village, embosomed in trees, makes a pleasing feature in the fascinating scene. It was with regret we learned, that much of the enchantment that depends upon the rural quiet and sequestered appearance of Britton ferry, was likely soon to be destroyed, by the introduction of a canal to the village. This is the artificial cut which goes twelve miles up the valley of Neath, and is now fast approaching

from that town to Britton ferry; it having been found there is a much greater draught of water for vessels of burthen, at the latter than the former place. I scarcely need observe, the alteration this will occasion at the fairy land we have been describing, will only be pleasing to those who are engaged in the commercial concerns, of which it is destined to be the future theatre. The noise and bustle of trade effectually preclude those intellectual enjoyments, serene contemplation, and philosophical pensiveness.

The road from Britton ferry to Neath, for the greater part, creeps along the side of the hills to the eastward of the town, and consequently commands a fine view of the vale called Cwm Neath. We saw the grand features of the scenery, but as evening had commenced, the detail of it was scarcely discernable, it was a view

“ Glanced from th’ imperfect surfaces of things,

“ Uncertain if beheld.”—

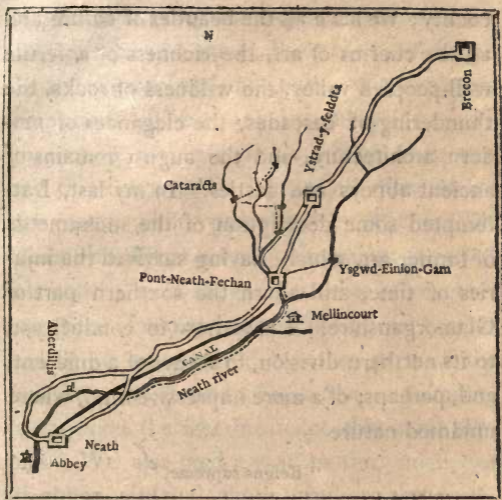
We were not sorry, therefore, to enter the town, which we did at eight o’clock, and fixed ourselves at the Ship and Castle inn, attracted by the good-humoured face of the little fat

landlord, Mr. Roteley, whose attention and civility have not belied his cast of countenance.

Your's, &c.

R. W.





LETTER III.

TO THE SAME.

Brecon, Aug. 13th.

WE have at length quitted Glamorgan-shire, and parted with our friends, the Th-m-s's, circumstances which we cannot revert to without feeling considerable regret. No district, perhaps, in the three kingdoms exhibits such a variety in its scenery, as this

county; we have all the beauties of nature and all the charms of art, the richness of a fertile well-peopled valley, the wildness of rocks, the thundering of cascades, the elegances of modern architecture, and the august remains of ancient abbeys and castles. In my last, I attempted some description of the monuments of former art, which, having survived the injuries of time, still adorn the southern part of Glamorganshire. I have now to conduct you to its northern division, to scenes of a different, and, perhaps, of a more impressive kind, where untamed nature

“ Reigns supreme,

“ ’Mid dreary solitude and sombrous shade.

“ In awful majesty, she here displays

“ Her wonder-working energy to man.”*

The appearance of Neath, from whence I last addressed you, does not prepossess the traveller much in its favour. It is seated at the

* Glamorganshire, exclusive of its scenery, is remarkable on other accounts. The prodigious increase of its population, and the growing consideration of its sea-ports, arise from its mineral and metal trade, which every year increases beyond calculation. This county and Monmouthshire are become the centre of the iron-trade of the whole kingdom; Shropshire being in a great measure exhausted, and Staffordshire considerably fallen off. Iron, copper, lead, lapis calaminaris, brass, and tin-plates, are either found or manufactured in Glamorganshire.

bottom of a valley, and on the banks of the river of the same name; the streets are irregular and narrow, and the houses, with very few exceptions, ill-built and incommodious. Its population may be estimated at between two and three thousand. The small ruins of its old castle, built, probably, by Richard de Greenfield, Fitz-hamon's companion, attracted our notice; from the circumstance of one narrow piece of wall, which rises to a great height, and being unsupported by other parts of the building; threatens to crush the surrounding cottages on the first hurricane that shall happen. We also paid a visit to the remains of its abbey, situated about a mile to the southward of the town. This religious house was founded in the time of Richard de Greenfield, who united with Constance his wife in giving certain lands and tithes, around Neath, to the abbot and convent of Savigny in France; the brethren accordingly erected a spacious monastery on the spot, and dedicated it to the Holy Trinity, but do not appear to have exercised any power over its members. It shared the fate of similar institutions at the Reformation, and was then valued at one hundred and fifty pounds

per annum.* The ruins are of prodigious extent, but being in the immediate neighbourhood of the metal works, and inhabited by the squalid families of the workmen employed there, they do not produce the pleasing emotions that religious remains, under different circumstances, so naturally and generally inspire. We easily traced the ichnography of the old church, which was of elegant architecture and an immense size. A vulgar tradition respecting the latter circumstance still exists in the neighbourhood, that *seven parsons* could preach in different parts of it at one time, without being heard by each other; a proof, if it be a fact, that these worthy pastors had neither the lungs nor energy of some of our modern pulpit-orators.

We next visited the iron and copper works, manufactories that promise to render Neath, at no distant period, a very different town in point of appearance, to what it is at present. Two immense blast furnaces, belonging to Messrs. Fox and Co. are constantly at work, each of them producing upwards of thirty tons of pig-

* Tanner, Not. Mon. 714.

iron every week. They are blown by iron bellows, worked by a *double engine*,* constructed on the plan of Messrs. Boulton and Watts, with a steam cylinder forty inches in diameter. A foundery also, belonging to the same firm, attracted our attention; as well as another blast furnace, and a foundery, the property of Messrs. Raby and Co.;† two considerable copper-works, the one belonging to Messrs. Roe and Co. of Macclesfield, the other to the Mines-Royal Company; and a noble chemical work, the property of Messrs. Bewick and Horne, in which are manufactured sugar of lead, vitriol, and the best and purest allum in the kingdom. In addition to these sources of wealth, Neath has a most productive colliery in its immediate neighbourhood, which gives an incalculable advantage to all its manufactories; as well as a canal running twelve miles up its beautiful valley, and conducting to its port all the product of the different mines and manufactories that enrich this extensive *cwm*.

Having received very minute instructions from our obliging landlord, our party proceeded

* A *double engine* is one in which the steam acts *under*, as well as *above* the piston.

† These at present are at a stand.

up Cwm Neath, following either the course of the river, or walking along the banks of the canal, which runs nearly parallel with it. The scenery of this valley is highly beautiful and picturesque—on each side lie lofty banks irregular and abrupt, profusely mantled with trees, but allowing, through this mass of shade, the frequent appearance of the face of the rock. As its direction is for some miles almost rectilinear, the town of Neath, the manufactories, the shipping, and the sea, form cheerful features in the distant view; while the more immediate objects are, waving woods and rocky banks, tumbling water-falls, and rapid streams; varied occasionally by small inclosures and neat farm-houses. The little brooks which lend their tributary streams to swell the consequence of the river Neath, murmur down smaller vallies, at right angles with Cwm Neath, exhibiting the same striking scenery, though on a less scale.

Leaving Knoll* (the once celebrated, but now neglected seat of the late Sir Robert

* The name of this mansion implies its situation, which is elevated, and commands an extensive view. There are, however, objections to this situation; the town of Neath is too near to be a pleasing object; and the great manufactories standing at the

Mackworth) on our right, we pursued the canal, and at the distance of two miles from Neath reached Aberdillis forge, the property of John Miers, esq; where the crude or pig-iron is formed into bars, and sent in that state to another forge belonging to the same gentleman, further up the valley, called Insysgerwn, to be manufactured into tin-plate. A scene of great beauty shortly after occurred—the pleasing cascade at Aberdillis mill; the fall, indeed, is not so stupendous as some others in its neighbourhood, but certain little local circumstances render it very interesting. In order to survey the scene to advantage, it is necessary for the spectator to wade the river which flows from the fall, and to plant himself under the opposite bank, since a huge rock covers, as it were, the front of the cascade, and prevents a sight of it from the road. A roaring torrent, called the Dillis, flowing from the mountains, is now seen discharging itself through a rocky rent,

distance of not more than a mile and a half to the *south-west* of it, the general prevalence of that wind must wrap the house in highly disagreeable, and, perhaps, pernicious fumes, three-fourths of the year. The house is now deserted, and falling to decay; and the artificial cascade, from the circumstance of its being in the neighbourhood of some stupendous natural waterfalls, is not worth the trouble of a visit.

darkened by the thickest shade, down a perpendicular descent of forty feet. Near the point from whence it tumbles, a rugged misshapen mass of stone receives it, and, dividing its waters, throws them out of their natural direction, and creates two cataracts, which cross and intersect each other in a most whimsical manner. The scene above is equally extraordinary; the river overshadowed with trees has the appearance of issuing from an impenetrable wood, and rolls over a rocky, laminated bed, consisting of ledges not unlike a vast but irregular flight of steps.

A little further an artificial curiosity afforded us amusement—the tin-plate works at Inysygerwn. Here we contemplated, with astonishment, the operations of machines of which before we had no idea; rollers of such immense power as reduced bars of iron two inches deep to the thickness of a crown-piece, by passing them a certain number of times through their revolving cylinders; and scissars cutting plates and bars in sunder of half an inch thick, with the same ease that a fair sempstress would divide a wristband. When, by the repeated pressure of the rollers, the plate is reduced to a sufficient thinness to receive the coating of

tin, it is cut by the scissars into sheets of a proper size. These are scoured well with sand, and immersed in an acid liquor, where they are suffered to remain some time, and then quickly and perfectly dried; a process pursued in order to clear them entirely from every speck of rust, the smallest particle of which would prevent the tin from adhering to the iron, as no metal will combine itself with any *earth*, and rust is nothing more than the *earth of iron*. The plates, thus cleansed, are next plunged vertically into a pot containing melted tin, the surface of which is covered with pitch, suet, or some fatty substance, to prevent the calcination of the tin, and to make the surface of the iron more inclined to receive its coating. By this immersion, the tin immediately unites itself to the plates, and they are taken out completely tinned; being afterwards well rubbed with bran, in order to give them a more brilliant appearance, they are packed in chests, and sent to Neath to be shipped for the London, Liverpool, and Bristol markets.

Quitting Insysgerwn, we crossed the canal aqueduct, and soon found ourselves at Mellin-court, a romantic village five miles from Neath. Here is another large work of Mr.

Miers's, consisting of a blast furnace, a finery, and a foundery; the whole apparatus of which is upon an improved and stupendous plan. The great wheel exhibits a periphery of one hundred and twenty feet, and the bellows, of a new construction, may be considered as another wonder of modern mechanism. They are easily regulated, but still some care is necessary in the management of them, since their action may be increased to such a degree as to threaten the destruction of the whole building. An accident of this sort occurred a short time ago, when, by giving them too much power, an immense piece of timber, which had been bought in Shropshire, and cost Mr. Miers five hundred pounds, was snapped in sunder in a moment.

At a short distance from the works we found the celebrated cascade of Mellincourt, formed by the fall of the little river Cledaugh, from an height of eighty feet. The accompaniments are good—dark precipice and overhanging woods; but the cataract itself is trifling, the breadth of water being disproportionately inferior to its length. You must recollect, however, that we saw it to much disadvantage, the season having been for some time very dry.

Indeed, the beauty of these natural curiosities depends entirely upon the weather; to see them to advantage, they must be visited during or immediately after a heavy rain. A mountain torrent, like the woman of a certain Greek philosopher, is all impetuous rage, or all insipid tameness. A storm of a few hours excites it to fury; its passion, however, is but transient, and as short a portion of fine weather lulls it again to repose. The view from the rock above is much more tremendous than that from below: a dark, perpendicular, semicircular chasm, the bottom of which is occupied by troubled waters, and vast masses of stone riven from their parent cliffs. While we gazed at this impressive scene, we heard with astonishment, and some little incredulity, the story of a sow belonging to the mill, which was carried over the face of the rock into the pool below, and lived for some years afterwards to *grunt* the terrifying tale. A poor bullock, which experienced the same accident, was not so fortunate, being literally beaten to pieces by the fall.

We now forded the river, (which is practicable only in fine weather) and took the banks of the canal, continuing along its sides for three or four miles. As we proceeded, the vale ra-

ther narrowed upon us; its sides became more abrupt and rocky, and the river, though hidden in woods, convinced us of its proximity, by the ceaseless roar of the waters over their stony bed. At the distance of ten miles from Neath, near to the side of the canal, we passed a productive colliery, worked by Mr. Williams; and shortly after Aberpergam, the seat of Mrs. Aubrey, behind whose house are the iron-stone works belonging to Messrs. Fox and Co. The proprietors of both these mines avail themselves of the new cut through the vale, by sending the materials of them down to Neath, where the coal is shipped for distant markets, and the iron-stone manufactured in Messrs. Fox and Co.'s works at the Abbey.

Passing on for half a mile, we crossed a railroad, along which the stone-coal is brought from the works of Mr. Leigh and Mr. Thomas, to the side of the canal. The mine lies at some distance to the left hand, and may be entered through a long level. The stone-coal, which, I believe, has as yet only been worked in South-Wales, is of a very peculiar nature; it emits considerable heat, with little light, and scarcely any smoke, and on the application of blast to it when ignited, is quickly blown out. With

these peculiarities, which, probably, are occasioned by a deficiency of bitumen, the stone-coal is of material use in the drying of malt, and other operations, before only to be effected by coaked-coal; hence the demand for it is great. The mines, however, being inexhaustible, easily answer it, to the prodigious emolument of their proprietors, who are making rapid fortunes by them.*

The character of the country became gradually more wild and magnificent. The hills swelled into mountains, and rock and precipice occurred more frequently. We were particularly struck with the *contour* of a mountain, which rose to the north-east, barren and rude to the greatest degree. Its name *Craig-y-Llyn*, "the rock of the lake," bespeaks the circumstance that renders it remarkable—a large

* The vein of stone-coal in Mr. Thomas's mine is nine feet thick, and *dips*† to the west one yard in twelve. It is cut and delivered at the mouth of the level for one shilling per ton, and sold at Neath for ten shillings and sixpence per ton; sixpence per ton is, however, given to the masters of the vessels receiving it, by way of gratuity, and to encourage them to come again; an improper practice, as it is done at the expence of the merchant. Mr. Williams's and Mr. Leigh's collieries come under the same description. The stone-coal is sold at the same price at Swansea as Neath, and a similar custom observed with respect to the masters of the vessels.

† This is the miner's term for the inclination of strata downwards.

pool of water in one of its cwms, above a mile in circumference.

Extremely pleased with our ramble through the vale of Neath, we reached the Angel inn at Pont-Neach-Fechan sufficiently early to allow a survey of the neighbouring objects of curiosity before the close of the evening. This little village is situated 12 miles above Neath, and consists of about twenty houses, of which four (too large a proportion) are ale-houses, but none of them equal to our head-quarters in point of comfort and accommodation.

English is spoken pretty generally here, and the inhabitants are sufficiently courteous to strangers, though, we could not but remark, our welcome was the more hearty after Mrs. Jones, the hostess, had discovered that our companions, the Th-m-s's, could converse with her in her own dear native tongue. There is little interesting in the village itself, if we except one practice, which, indeed, is not peculiar to this place, but extends to all the hamlets through Cwm Neath; I mean the singular use to which the *ovens* of the cottages are applied. The peasantry all keep dogs, and are surprisingly attached to these domestic animals; in proof of their affection,

they allow them to occupy the *ovens* when not engaged by a batch of bread, and actually make beds of straw within them for their better accommodation. The effect produced by this custom is odd enough to a stranger; the moment he enters a cottage, one, two, or three dogs pop their heads out of the oven-holes, and salute him in a manner as strange as unexpected.

We had soon refreshed ourselves, and enquired for a guide to conduct us to some fine scenery in the neighbourhood of Pont-Neath-Fechan, when the son of our landlady very good-humouredly offered his services on the occasion. Our first object was some singular earth-works on the banks of the Neath river.*

* The Neath river abounds with salmon, but the mode which the country people adopt to take them is so destructive, as must speedily lessen the number materially, unless it be either altered or prevented. About and above Pont-Neath-Fechan, the river is a rapid one, and the salmon, in consequence, are frequently under the necessity of forming the spawning bed for themselves. This they do by rolling with their noses a number of stones together, about the size of an egg. When the fishermen meet with any of these spawning beds, which do not lie in such a situation as shall enable them to strike the fish with facility, they destroy them altogether, and form others themselves, near the banks of the river. Opposite these beds they build up a kind of hedge, to cover their approach to the river, and when the fish are in the very act of spawning, they strike at them with a spear, and generally with too fatal a success.

These banks, for the distance of one mile in length, and half a mile in breadth, (on each side the river) are lined with mounds, composed of earth and stones, varying in their dimensions; some being two or three yards long, one wide, and one high; and a few others of five or four yards long, two wide, and one high. They lie nearly in straight lines, running parallel to the banks and each other, but at unequal distances. Originally they must have amounted to some hundreds; but agriculture and inclosures have in several places destroyed them; still, however, they are numerous. That they are artificial, is sufficiently evident, both from their formality, and the appearance of the excavations (on their uppermost side) from whence the materials were dug to form them. They cannot, notwithstanding, be attributed to the quarrier, because they occur on spots where his trials would not be made; nor are they the effect of a mining adventure, since the neighbouring rock is not a mineral *measure*.*— Bearing the evident marks of remote antiquity, they must be attributed to distant ages; but

* The miners' term for all matter under which minerals are usually found.

whether they owe their origin to the Britons or Romans, or for what purpose they were intended, must be left to those who are more deeply schooled in ancient earth-works than ourselves.*

Following from hence the course of the Neath river for some time, we at length reached one of its tributary streams, the little mountain torrent Pyrddin. To this we attached ourselves, and pursued for nearly a mile its romantic banks, where rock and wood, and waterfall, occur with almost endless repetition. We were led, however, to one particular spot, which excels every other feature of the river in point of beauty and magnificence; it is called

* It is well known the Romans were in this neighbourhood. Traces of their presence here occur in many places. To the north of these mounds, at the distance of three miles, there is a Roman causeway, called in Welsh Sarn-Helen, or Helen's causeway, and on it the remains of an exploratory camp. Two other earth-works of the same kind are seen to the north-east, one at the distance of four miles, and another five miles off. In the road to Myrthir-Tidfil, also, one mile from the spot we are speaking of, is a bridge called in Welsh Pont-Dinas, the bridge of the city, to which a tradition attaches, of its having formerly been the road to some memorable place. These circumstances, thrown together, may, perhaps, authorise us to conclude, that the mounds were Roman, and connected in some manner with the stations of this people in the counties of Brecon, Glamorgan, and Monmouth.

Ysgwd-Einion-Gam,* or Einion's Crooked Waterfall, and exhibits, indeed, a wonderful scene. A black precipice presents itself perpendicular, scooped by nature into an hollow, forming the segment of a circle. The right side of this chasm, looking up it, is fringed and adorned with curious beautiful trees, such as the mountain-ash, willow, &c. whilst the left presents a face of rude and naked rock. In the centre is seen the river, which, after tearing through a gloomy narrow glen, throws itself, from an elevation of seventy or eighty feet, in one grand unbroken sheet of water. The beauty of the scene is heightened by a little accidental circumstance—an oak, as if planted purposely for decoration, throws its waving head over the stream, at the very point whence it is precipitated down the face of the rock, and adds much to the picturesque effect. The *goat*, also, is neither an infrequent nor an improper appendage to it; here he is often seen skipping about upon the ledges of precipices frightful to behold, with perfect ease and unconcern. Sometimes, indeed, allured by the ivy or other

* Ysgwd means a push, a jostle, a thrust; and by an easy metaphorical adaption is made to signify a waterfall, or water pushing down.

vegetables, which creep along the face of the rock, he jumps down to situations from which he can never return; in these spots he would unquestionably perish, if he were not discovered by its proprietor, who, in that case, in order to relieve him, drops a rope with a slip-knot at the end of it: this fastens round his horns or his body, and either hauls him to the top of the rock, or lowers him gently to the bottom. The waterfall is approached by a rude and difficult road, winding down the side of a precipitous bank entirely overgrown with a variety of shrubs, amongst which the wild raspberry and wild strawberry are found in great abundance, bearing a profusion of fruit of exquisite flavour. This path was formed, it seems, by Sir Herbert Mackworth, father of the late Sir Robert, to whom the property belonged, and who took great pleasure in visiting the cascade.

How frequently does it happen, my friend, that what we most delight in proves our greatest bane! Sir Herbert's partiality cost him his life. The very last time he visited Ysgwd-Eineon-Gam, in passing the road made at his own expence for the express purpose of an easy access to it, a thorn from one of the bushes ran into his finger. A violent inflam-

mation almost immediately took place, this was succeeded by a rapid mortification, which in a few days put a period to his life.

Having spent an hour most agreeably amid this wonderful scenery, we returned to our snug little retreat, the Angel inn, by a nearer road, which leads to a farm-house, and from thence along the side of Cwm-Tawe (an immense glen, with a mountain torrent roaring through it) immediately down to Pont-Neath-Fechan.

On reaching the inn, our conductor further obliged us by introducing to our acquaintance a gentleman whose polite attentions must ever claim our warmest acknowledgments.* This is Mr. Gilbert Gilpin, a native of Wrexham, who has been stationary at Pont-Neath-Fechan for several months, superintending a speculation in which he is engaged, in conjunction with Mr. Barrow. Struck with the appearance of the country, which abounds with minerals

* I cannot resist taking this opportunity of returning my own particular thanks to this gentleman, for the favour of his subsequent communications relative to the mineralogy, manufactures, and trade of Monmouthshire and Glamorganshire; communications the more valuable, as his intimate knowledge of the subject, his spirit of investigation, and his peculiar means of obtaining information, render their exactness and authenticity unquestionable.

and calcareous rock, these gentlemen took a lease of the Marquis of Bute, of one thousand acres of land in this neighbourhood, on a mining adventure; and have lately opened, and worked upon it with much success, a quarry of a beautiful black and grey marble. Mr. Gilpin has also discovered traces of former attempts to work a lead-mine on the spot, and from certain indications (which, being an admirable mineralogist, probably do not deceive him) he entertains no doubt, that a very productive one may be opened, as soon as peace shall allow a free market, and render the speculation worth pursuing.

Perceiving we were travellers of some curiosity, Mr. Gilpin, with the candour that generally accompanies intellectual worth, and the liberality that is not afraid of communicating information to others lest they should be as wise as ourselves, immediately offered his services to attend us on the ensuing day up the rivers Hepste and Felddta, the scenery of which he was intimately acquainted with, having been continually occupied in examining their beds for minerals and fossils of various descriptions. The offer, as you may suppose, was thankfully received on our parts, and Mrs.

Jones had immediate orders to prepare every thing her larder afforded, that our friendship might be cemented over a comfortable meal, the whole party being voraciously hungry. No sooner was our supper dispatched, than Mrs. Jones gave us notice, that at a neighbouring public-house the cottagers had met, and were dancing to the sound of the village harp. The idea of a *genuine Welsh Ball* pleased us highly; and Mr. Gilpin having previously discovered that our company there would not be considered as intrusive, we immediately adjourned, under his auspices, to the scene of festivity.

With regard to myself, I confess, that happiness is always contagious; nor can I see others merry, without feeling an emotion of joy also; I cannot express, therefore, the pleasure I felt on entering the room. It was not, indeed, very commodious, nor famously illuminated, being about fifteen feet square, and having only one solitary candle of sixteen to the pound. The party, however, which consisted of twenty-five or thirty, made up for every defect; animated by the tones of their favourite national instrument, and enlivened with the idea of the week's labours being terminated, (for it was Saturday night) they entered

con amore into the business of the evening, and exhibited a complete picture of perfect happiness.

Those who are at peace with themselves, generally feel a kindness of heart towards others; our reception, therefore, was most cordial, and though there appeared to be no particular *arbiter elegantiarum*, yet the duties of the office were not neglected; for men and women individually solicited us to dance. As the females were very handsome, it is most probable we should have accepted their offers, had there not been a powerful reason to prevent us—our complete inability to unravel the mazes of a Welsh dance. 'Tis true there is no great variety in the figures of them, but the few they perform are so complicated and long, that they would render an apprenticeship to them necessary in an Englishman. We therefore contented ourselves with looking on, and were really astonished at the agility and skill which these rustics displayed. Our surprise, however, was still more excited by the observance of a custom, which, as it is not practised at the *Bath Balls*, we were not prepared to expect. On a sudden the dance ceased, and the harper, running his finger rapidly down the chords of

his instrument, gave the accustomed signal, on which every gentleman saluted his partner three or four times with considerable ardour. The dancing then re-commenced with such spirit, as convinced us that this interlude had added to the energies of all the parties concerned. I could not but recollect this was an ancient practice,* and whispered as much to J——n, who regretted sorely that a good old custom, which appeared to be productive of such general satisfaction, should have fallen a victim to modern refinement. The ball was concluded by a contest of agility between two brothers, who danced two distinct hornpipes with so much power of muscle, variety of step, and inflexible perseverance, as exceeded every thing of the kind we had seen. On our retiring, a plate was brought round to receive our contributions for the purchase of *cwrraw*, and we

* It was a practice formerly for the gentlemen to salute the ladies at the commencement of some dances, a custom that Shakespeare alludes to in that song of Ariel's:

“Come unto these yellow sands,
 “And there join hands;
 “*Courtsied when you have and kiss'd,*
 “(The wild waves whist)
 “Foot it featly here and there.”

thought a shilling each little enough for the entertainment we had received.

As our friends, the Th-m-s's, were now under the necessity of leaving us, it was our intention to have risen very early yesterday morning, visited the Felddta and Hepste rivers before breakfast, and returned with them to Pont-Neath-Fechan, that we might all have an opportunity of attending the service of a Welsh church. Our plans, however, were entirely frustrated by the inclemency of the morning; a heavy rain had set in during the night, which continued to pour with unremitting fury until noon. Still it was dark and unpleasant; but as Mr. Gilpin assured us we should see the prodigious cascades on these streams in all their grandeur, in consequence of the torrents that had fallen, we determined to avail ourselves of the remaining part of the day, and sleep at Ystrad-y-Felddta, a village about six miles by the direct road from Pont-Neath-Fechan. Taking leave, therefore, with much regret, of our agreeable companions, we left the latter village at one o'clock, under the direction of Mr. Gilpin.

The *turnpike-road* from this place to Ystrad-y-Felddta is dull and uninteresting, but the

walk to it, by the way of the Hepste and Felddta rivers, displays a succession of scenes beautiful, magnificent, and sublime; scenes, however, which have had hitherto but few admirers, since they are so little known even to the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages, that some of the finest amongst them are, as yet, without a name. Excuse me, then, should my letter assume the minuteness and stiffness of an itinerary: *you* cannot have the advantage of such a guide as accompanied *us*, when you traverse these romantic regions, and will require, consequently, all the assistance that particular description can convey.

On quitting Pont-Neath-Fechan, we struck into the Myrthyr-Tidfil road, which runs parallel to the Hepste and Felddta rivers, (now forming one united stream) and pursued it about a mile; an agreeable walk through verdant meadows and gently-sloping woods. At this distance we reached Pont-Dinas bridge, where the scenery suddenly changes—the hills becoming divested of their softness, and starting into ragged rocks and lofty precipices. One huge cliff is particularly remarkable, called Craig-Dinas, or the Rock of the City; this we passed to the left, and following the Dinas

brook for a few hundred yards, arrived at the first wonder of this valley, a singular natural curiosity called *Bwa Maen*, or the "Stone of the Bow."*

See the plate opposite page 1.

The name, like all the Celtic appellations, indicates its appearance and figure. It is a huge mass of rock, of the calcareous kind, burning into excellent lime, and taking a beautiful polish, becoming by these means a valuable black and grey marble;† it consists of several strata, disposed in directions most whimsical and uncommon. The rock, which protrudes itself from the parent mountain, presents a flat face, beautifully variegated, and ornamented with a wonderful variety of trees, and shrubs—oaks, ashes, elms, hollies, hawthorns, ivy-bushes, lichens, and mosses; thickly tenanted by ravens, jack-daws, and different species of hawks, which build their nests, and rear their young, inaccessible to the foot of plunder, and secure from the hand of violence. The form of *Bwa Maen* approaches to that of a quarter of a circle, and its various strata preserve the direction of this outline. The height

* See the Plate annexed.

† A quarry of this has been lately opened by Messrs. Barrow and Gilpin, and worked with much success.

may be ninety or one hundred feet, and the breadth seventy or eighty; the curvature is formed by a sweep made in the strata from the left to the right. These continue their circular form till they reach the top of the rock, when they assume a different one, and drop suddenly to the earth, in nearly a vertical direction. The number of strata thus oddly disposed, may be seven or eight, and the area, or part of the rock not occupied by these curved strata, is filled up by others horizontally arranged.* How far they continue this fantastic direction in the mountain is uncertain, though they may be traced pursuing their curvature about two hundred yards parallel to the brook, which runs to the left of the rock. On the right of the curved strata, the lime-stone is thrown out by a *fault*,† and is replaced by the coal and iron-stone *measures*;‡ on the left also, the rock is lime-stone, the property of Dr. Bevan, of Neath, and Capt. Bevan, of the Gla-

* On examining the turning, or short sharp curve, made by this capricious alteration in the course of the strata, not the least appearance of a crack is to be perceived in any part of it; a proof that this dipping of them must have taken place when they were in a fluid, or at least in a much softer state than their present.

† The miner's term for a fracture, or division in the regular strata of the earth.—‡ The miner's term for all matter under which minerals are usually found.

morgan militia. On this side it varies much in depth, but in no part is it less than from fifty to one hundred yards. Here the stratification is very various; in some places nearly vertical, in others moderately inclined, dipping to the north-west; whilst behind it the coal and ironstone measures are brought in again by another fault.

Bwa Maen belongs to the Marquis of Bute, and, I think I may venture to say, exhibits as great a geological curiosity, and as remarkable an example of singular stratification, as any in the kingdom.

Though the principal object in this scene is too flat and uniform to be picturesque, there are interesting circumstances around it, which, if distinct from Bwa Maen, would be highly so. The rocky bank to the right, ascending abruptly from the brook, is clothed with wood from the top to the bottom. On the left a similar elevation appears, more rude and bare than its opposite neighbour; exposing a flat face of mural stratified rock, but crowned with a noble mantle of trees; whilst at its feet a roaring cataract tumbles from fragment to fragment,*

* Some of these fragments, or detached pieces of rock, are, by measurement, of two hundred tons weight.

and separates it from the mighty detached mass of rock called Bwa Maen. Here we found reason to congratulate ourselves on having taken Mr. G.'s advice, and disregarded the rain, for from that circumstance arose much of the beauty of the spot we were contemplating. The torrents which fell in the night, and the showers that poured down during the morning, had given a character of fury to this mountain-river, of which it is entirely divested in dry weather. In moderate seasons, this fine circumstance is entirely lost; the brook itself disappears, and entering a hole in the rock about one hundred and fifty yards above the curved strata, it becomes invisible for a quarter of a mile, and then discharges itself from another aperture into the Felddta river, a little below Dinas bridge.

Following our excellent guide, we left this sublime scene, ascended with considerable difficulty the steep hill to the right of it, and passed over the head of Bwa Maen, from whence we had a singular bird's-eye view of the thundering torrent, and the rocky glen through which it poured its impetuous waters. From hence we again scrambled down a precipitous declivity, to the margin of the same brook, in order

to see to the best effect an immense perpendicular lime-stone rock, finely spotted with vegetation, with the Dinas river roaring at its foot. The most curious circumstance of the scene is a lofty crag, detached from the precipice, and rearing itself in solitary majesty. This was too singular a sport of nature to escape the observation of superstition, which has accordingly connected it with supernatural agency. Its name is *Ystol-Gwiddon*, or the chair of the witch; and tradition relates, that it was separated from the rock by one of these gifted beings, who, when the neighbouring chieftains were about to wage battle with each other, used to plant herself on this aerial seat, and weave the woof of human destiny; the circumstance immediately suggested the fanciful tissue of Scandinavian superstition, and the dreadful employments of the northern Parcæ.

“ Now the storm begins to lower,

“ (Haste, the loom of hell prepare)

“ Iron sleet of arrowy shower

“ Hurtles in the darken'd air.

“ Glitt'ring lances are the loom,

“ When the dusky warp we strain,

“ Weaving many a soldier's doom,

“ Orkney's woe, and Randver's bane.

- " See the grisly texture grow!
 " ('Tis of human entrails made)
 " And the weights that play below,
 " Each a gasping warrior's head!

 " Shafts for shuttles, dipt in gore,
 " Shoot the trembling cords along;
 " Sword that once a monarch bore,
 " Keep the tissue close and strong."

We continued along the brook to the end of the rock, and then took a narrow goat's path, winding up the side of the declivity, which led us to a wild common, commanding a view of the two Alpine rivers, Hepste and Felddta, and their magnificent banks. Here we met with a considerable vein of the laminated species of the vitriolated *terra ponderosa*, or, according to the new vocabulary, the *sulphate of barytes*; which also contains some detached masses of lead ore. It is leased by Messrs. Barrow and Gilpin, and intended to be worked, as soon as the price of lead (which in consequence of the war is lamentably low) shall be such as may offer any prospect of advantage to the lessees. A foot-way now received and conducted us through the common to Culhepste farm, opening to us a glorious prospect of the vale of Neath, the bay of Swansea, and the Mumble-Head. Passing the farm-house,

(which is not more than two miles from Pont-Neath-Fechan) we continued along the common towards the confluence of the two rivers, Felddta and Hepste. Here we caught a view of the banks of these streams, diverging from each other, and presenting a pleasingly-diversified scene; rock and wood, precipice and slope, succeeding each other in most agreeable alternation; the whole enlivened by a stupendous cataract, tumbling down the rocky bed of the Hepste river. Continuing parallel to this stream a few hundred yards, we reached another waterfall of truly-singular appearance; it is called Culhepste cascade, and is formed by the whole river, in one unbroken sheet of water of five or six and thirty feet square, pouring over the ledge of a flat rock. This it does with such violence, as to assume in its descent a sweeping direction, forming a segment of a circle, and allowing a passage between itself and the face of the precipice over which it falls. Under this cataract we passed, and strange to say, were sheltered by the watery arch above us, for ten minutes, from a very severe shower, that happened to fall whilst we were at the place. The road is nothing more than a rude natural ledge.

where the hand of art has never ventured to exercise itself, and not more than three or four feet in width; but with all this apparent danger about it, it is a common way, both for men and cattle, who frequently pass under Culhepste cascade, as a shorter cut to some of the neighbouring hamlets. Having passed this extraordinary turnpike-road, Mr. G. led us by wooded serpentine paths, little known, and less frequented, into a small romantic valley, with the river Felddta rolling at the feet of its perpendicular declivities.

At this point a grand scene suddenly burst upon us. The stunning noise of falling water had already prepared us for the sight of a stupendous cataract; but imagination, with all her magical powers, could not delineate a picture so sublime as the one now before us. Looking up the Felddta river, we saw a series of connected water-falls, forming one whole, of inconceivable grandeur. The flood, enlarged to an uncommon degree by a deluge of rain, and pent up within a channel too narrow for its increased bulk, tore over the rocks, and rushed from ledge to ledge, with a fury that produced a sensation on the nervous system, as if the whole atmosphere around were

agitated, and the solid foundation of the rock were shaken under our feet. The rage of the torrent was such, as completely divested it, during its descent, of the appearance of water; all was vapour and foam, and wild confusion.

Ascending the hill to our right, we lost sight of this overpowering scene, and again pursued a rural foot-way, which conducted us, through woods and inclosures, to another magnificent cascade, but of a character perfectly different to the falls we had just left. The whole bed of the river is here separated in an oblique direction, the lower division of it experiencing a sudden perpendicular depression of nearly forty feet; down this descent tumbles a vast body of water, into a bed of enormous rocks, presenting to us, from the point where we viewed it, a superficies of eighty or ninety feet broad, and half as many in depth. Both this and the preceding natural curiosities are so little known to the inhabitants of the country, that they have no particular names, though they certainly are the grandest things of their kind in the whole principality.

After feasting our fancies with a contemplation of this awful spectacle, we slowly de-

scended into a deep dale, and approaching a yawning chasm in the rock, perceived the river Felddta, like the classical Alpheus, rolling its stream through a vast subterraneous cavern, which it had entered about a quarter of a mile above. Had the water been low, we might have pursued its gloomy course through the windings of this natural excavation, for nearly one hundred yards, to an aperture on the left hand, where it quits its secret bed, and again emerges into day; but the floods preventing us, we continued our walk to the valley, in which it first shrinks from the light, and hides its head in the rock. This is a scene more solemn, though perhaps less grand, than any we had hitherto contemplated; a profound and gloomy glen, formed by the rocky banks, approaching each other so closely, as only to allow a narrow intermediate hollow, through which the river Felddta forces a troubled passage. At the extremity of this, arises a lofty precipice, shagged with shrubs and mosses, almost impervious to the sun from the surrounding woods; and at its foot appears a gaping fissure, arched and high, into which the river Felddta rushes with foaming impetuosity. The whole scene is romantic in the

extreme, and realizes, with the exception of the noxious atmosphere of Avernus, the description of the Mantuan bard :

“ Spelunca alta fuit, vastoque immanis hiatu,
 “ Scrupea, tuta lacu nigro nemorumque tenebris;
 “ Quam super haud ullæ poterant impune volantes
 “ Tendere iter pennis: talis sese halitus atris
 “ Faucibus effundens supera ad convexa ferebat.”

The chasm is called *Porthogo*, (the mouth of the cave) and a woman, living in its vicinity, acts as a guide to travellers, whose curiosity leads them to inspect its interior.*

This singular scene closed the wonders of the Hepste and Felddta valleys; a walk of not more than eight or nine miles, but full of grandeur, beauty, and variety.

“ In this track,

“ How long so e'er the wanderer roves, each step

“ Shall wake fresh beauties, each short point present

“ A diff'rent picture; new, and yet the same.”

* I must again observe, that much of the sublimity of the scenes which I have described, arose from the violent rain that had fallen in the night. In fine weather the water is low, the rivers tame, and some of the cascades invisible. To see them in perfection, the traveller must wait for rain, a delay that will be amply repaid by the gratification which the scenery must produce. For this he need not wait long, as the country about Ystrad-y-Felddta is seldom two days without showers.

Deeply impressed with grateful sentiments towards Mr. G. who had accompanied us four or five hours, in a very inclement day, we took leave of him at Porthogo, and reached Ystrad-y-Felddta, completely drenched, about seven o'clock in the evening.*

Much of human happiness arises from contrast,—a comparison of our present situation with that of others, or with what our own has formerly been. Seated by a good fire, therefore, with a bason full of boiled eggs, and a tankard of *cwrrrw* before us, you may suppose, we felt no small degree of gratification, after having been beaten by a pitiless shower, and blown upon by a cold south-easterly wind, for the whole afternoon without intermission. Our apartments, it is true, were rather homely, one being the *chandler's shop* of the village, and the other half filled with wool once dressed; but neither the powerful smell of decayed cheese, nor the less agreeable effluvium of rancid oil; the hardness of flock beds, nor the coarseness of dowlas sheets, could prevent us from enjoying a slumber sound, sweet, and

* When the water is low, the better, nearer, and pleasanter way, from Porthogo to Ystrad-y-Felddta, is by the river-side.

undisturbed, of nine hours;—the blessing resulting from moderate fatigue.

Notwithstanding the low ring appearance of this morning, we buckled on our knapsacks at six o'clock, and beat a march towards Brecon, over a road dull and uninteresting, wild and desolate. The only objects which led us out of the direct tract were, a Druidical stone, and a Roman way. They are immediate neighbours, and occur at the distance of four miles from Ystrad-y-Felddta, on the left hand. The former is very conspicuous, and a sufficient index of itself to the traveller. It is of secondary granite, and measures eleven feet and a half in height, and nine feet and a half in breadth; its form rude, but approaching to that of a rhomb, with the angles truncated. The *road* lies about sixty yards from this monument of British antiquity, and is composed of irregular loose stones, now in a great measure covered with earth, the *dorsum* flat, when compared with the rounding of modern roads. The country people call it Sarn-Helen, or Helen's causeway, which leads me to think it may be a branch of the military way of the same name, that ran from Caernarvon, in the north of Wales, to Salisbury in Wiltshire.

The ringing of the bells, as we approached Brecon, informed us there was something more than common going forward in the town; but it was not till we reached the turnpike, that we understood this signal of rejoicing was in consequence of the Judges this morning opening their commission of oyer and terminer here. Hoping to reach the Angel inn (the headquarters of C——ll and myself last year) without being noticed, we accelerated our pace, when, just as we were in view of our place of refuge, fortune (as if determined to mortify our vanity) ordered it so, that the Judges should issue forth from the very house to which we were going, with their long train of attendants, javelin-men, trumpeters, pages, &c. &c. Our sudden surprise, and consciousness of not being very respectable figures, (for we were once more wet through) gave a certain sheepishness to our appearance, that drew some looks of curious enquiry from their lordships. The gentlemen of the long gown too mechanically put their hands to their pockets to secure their fees, and the eager gaze of the tipstaves betrayed their expectation of a *job*. C——ll and I were for gliding down a neighbouring lane, and hiding our diminished heads, till the procession

had passed; but J——n, the *Cocles* of our party, disdaining flight, put himself at our head, and boldly leading us by the formidable groupe, lodged us safely in the Angel inn.

Your's, &c.

R. W.



had passed; but I — in the Coils of our party
disclaiming fight put himself at our head, and
boldly leading us by the formidable groups
lodged us safe in the Angel inn.

Your &c

R. W.





LETTER IV.

TO THE SAME.

Rbaidr-Gwy, Aug. 14th.

TO be remembered with respect and affection, by those who have heretofore interested us in any degree, is a very exalted species of gratification; and can only be exceeded by the pleasure that arises from a conviction of having *deserved* those tributes of regard. The former satisfaction I have expe-

rienced more than once, during this second trip into Wales, and been greeted with a warmth by some friends of the last year, that convinced me, I held a flattering place in their remembrance.

I am led to these observations by an adventure that occurred to-day, to my companion J——n, which implicates also a worthy character, with whom you are already acquainted, honest *Robert Lewis*, who entertained C——ll and myself last year with so much hospitality and kindness at his little retreat under the hill.*

Having once before travelled the turnpike-road from Brecon to Builth, I (*unfortunately*, as you will presently see) resolved to take the *old* way over the mountains, in order to vary, in some measure, the walk of the day. C——ll and I, therefore, struck to the right on leaving Brecon, while J——n, in order to see some pleasing features of the scenery, continued along the carriage-road. On our meeting again at the distance of fourteen miles from where we had separated, he told us, that after an hour's walk, he had been passed by a man on a small Welsh poney, who was riding very

* Walk through Wales, part i. p. 45.

smartly towards Brecon. A few seconds afterwards, he heard himself hailed by the traveller, and turning round, the following conversation passed between them:—

Stranger. “ I beg pardon, sir, for stopping
“ you on your way, and should not have taken
“ the liberty of doing so, if I hadn't seen in a
“ moment, from your good-humoured jolly
“ countenance, that you would not take offence
“ at it.”

J——n. ‘ None at all, my friend.’

Stranger. “ I fancy, sir, by your knapsack
“ and staff, that you are *walking* through our
“ country.”

J——n. ‘ I am, my friend.’

Stranger. “ Aye, well, for that matter, every
“ one to his mind; though I confess I wouldn't
“ part with little old dobbin, who has carried
“ me for fifteen years, for the best pair of legs
“ in all Brecknockshire. But pray, sir, are
“ you from Bath?”

J——n. ‘ Yes.’

Stranger. “ Do you know Mr. Warner?”

J——n. ‘ Intimately.’

Stranger, (eagerly.) “ Is he of your party, sir?”

J——n. ‘ Yes, but gone to Builth by the
old road.”

Stranger, (impetuously.) “ G—d bless his honest black face; I’d ha’ given twenty golden guineas to shake hands with him once more before I die, and if I hadn’t been subpoenaed to Brecon ’sises, in a cause where I hope to serve a friend, I’d ha’ gone back to Rhaidr on purpose to have seen him. But, do sir, tell him that old *Robert Lewis* sends him his blessing, and hopes he never will pass through Brecon again, without calling at his cottage, and once more tasting his *cwrrw.*”

Full of his accustomed hospitality, my old friend then desired that J——n would turn with him to his dwelling, and take some refreshment; a request which he urged with so much warmth and pertinacity, that it was with difficulty J——n could avoid complying with it. The hour of the day, and the distance of his residence, however, prevented a call of this kind, and obliged our companion to take leave of honest Robert; who loading him with good wishes, and pronouncing another solemn benediction on the party he was going to join, galloped off on his friendly errand to Brecon.

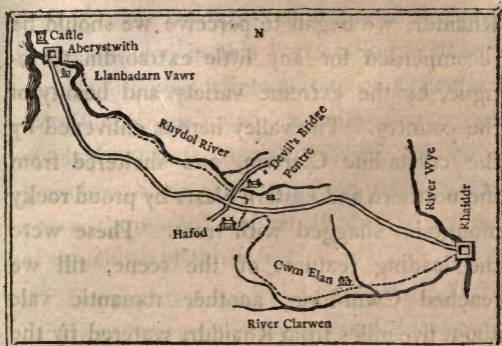
The country from Builth to Rhaidr you are already acquainted with. It was new, not-

withstanding, to my companions, who were much delighted with the diversified scenery—the Wye murmuring over its stony bed to the left, deep woods waving on its banks, and lofty, rocky mountains shooting above us to the right. The evening has been gloriously fine, which gave a peculiar brilliancy of tint to these interesting objects. We strolled, therefore, quietly on, and did not reach the Angel inn till late, where we have been received by Mr. and Mrs. Evans with their accustomed civility.

Your's, &c.

R. W.





LETTER V.

TO THE SAME.

Aberystwith, Aug. 17th.

WHILST we were preparing to depart from Rhaidr on Wednesday morning, Mr. Evans recommended us to take a circuitous road to Pentre, (where we purposed sleeping that night) by Cwm-Elan, which would lead us not more than eight miles out of our way. To us heroes of the foot, such an addition was a trifle, we therefore determined immediately to follow Mr. Evans's advice. . At the distance of two miles from

Rhaidr, we began to perceive we should be recompensed for any little extraordinary fatigue, by the extreme variety and beauty of the country. The valley here is enlivened by the crystalline Clerwin, and sheltered from the northern and eastern blasts by proud rocky mountains shagged with trees. These were the leading features of the scene, till we reached Cwm-Elan, another romantic vale about five miles from Rhaidr, watered by the little torrent Elan, from which it takes its name.* We were immediately struck with the singular combination of natural and artificial beauties at this place, of wild scenery and elegant ornament; dark woos, a foaming river, rugged rock, perpendicular precipices, and lofty mountains, contrasted with rich meadows, verdant lawns, neat inclosures, and a handsome modern-built mansion-house.

For this agreeable appearance of cultivation and civilized life, Cwm-Elan is indebted to Thomas Grove, esq; of Fern in Wiltshire, who,

* This place has lately afforded an happy subject for the elegant muse of the Reverend W. L. Bowles; who has favoured the world with a short poem, entitled Coombe Ellen, replete with his usual tenderness of thought, delicacy of sentiment, and witchery of expression.

having lately purchased an estate of nearly ten thousand acres in this part of Radnorshire, is rapidly bringing it into a state of agriculture. Continuing our walk a mile further, we reached a rude Alpine bridge, formed of branches of trees, thrown from rock to rock across the river Elan, which dashes below it at the depth of thirty feet:

“ The foot-way plank, that leads across

“ The narrow torrent, foaming through the chasm

“ Below; the rugged stones are wash'd and worn

“ Into a thousand shapes, and hollows scoop'd

“ By long attrition of the ceaseless surge,

“ Smooth, deep, and polish'd as the marble urn,

“ In their hard forms.”

BOWLES, *Coombe-Allen.*

Nothing can exceed the singularity of this scene; the bed of the river is a schistus rock, full of huge excavations of every conceivable shape and size, of milk-white hue, rendering the profound gulphs of water which they contain more dark and horrible. We saw the river in a tame state, as it had not been fed with rain for several days; but it is easy to imagine that its fury must be terrible, when, swelled with the mountain torrent, it rolls through a channel which offers so many obstacles to the progress of its impetuous course. It preserves this

wild and singular character for several miles, confined within a rocky chasm, the sides of which are perpendicular, and at times of great height, discoloured with drippings, tinted with mosses, and crowned with mountain-ash trees, birch, and wych elms. So wild and grotesque are the rocks which form the bed of the Elan, that a lively imagination might suppose it to consist of groupes of animals of every monstrous species, huddled together in the strangest confusion; it brought to my recollection the dreadful Scylla, and her howling dogs,

“ Scyllam, et cœruleis canibus resonantia saxa :”

an impression rendered still more lively by the roar of many waters, which is here kept up with an indefatigable and ceaseless din.

Just as we were quitting the river Elan for the Aberystwith road, a sharp-looking little Welchman approached us. His countenance was familiar to me, and the man's look of recognition convinced me that I was not unknown to him. On enquiry, I discovered him to be a person who had accompanied C——ll and myself last year through Cwm Ystwith lead-mine. Having mutually greeted each other, I could not avoid asking after the wel-

fare of another person who was of our party on the same occasion, Thomas Williams, the one-armed fisherman.* Knowledge, my friend, may be gathered from all quarters, and the trifling incidents of a cottager's history will sometimes furnish axioms for the moralist, or hints for the legislator. The honest miner informed me, that Tom had unfortunately gotten into a sad scrape shortly after my passing through Cardiganshire last year.— Though deprived of one arm by the accident I mentioned to you, he contrived to make very good use of the other, and handled his gun with the same skill which he exhibited in throwing his fishing-line. Colonel J**nes, to whom an extensive tract of land in this country belongs, had repeatedly spoken to Thomas on the subject, and forbidden him to pursue this illegal practice, but without success. After many offences, however, Williams received a summons from the Colonel, who is a magistrate, to attend at Hafôd, and deliver up his gun. Thither the delinquent went on the day appointed, trembling with apprehension, and anticipating all the horrors of fine and

* Walk through Wales, part i. p. 62.

imprisonment. The Justice appeared; the gun was delivered up, and nothing remained but the sentence of the law to be pronounced, and the *mittimus* to be made out; when, to the great joy and surprise of poor Tom, the Colonel addressed him in the following manner:—" I am very sorry, Williams, that your
 " necessities are such as lead you to illegal
 " practices in order to supply them. Deprived
 " as you are of the means of getting your
 " bread, I have no doubt that times are very
 " hard with you; but this, though perhaps
 " some little palliation of your conduct, is no
 " excuse for your acting against the laws of
 " your country. Convinced, however, that you
 " are at the bottom an honest fellow, and
 " rather unfortunate than roguish, I will put
 " you out of the way of being again tempted
 " by *want* to do an unlawful act. You shall
 " be my woodward; and, I doubt not, will do
 " the duties of the place diligently and faith-
 " fully. Here, take your gun again; I shall
 " not *now* be afraid to trust you with it."—
 The generous policy had its desired effect; Williams, penetrated with gratitude, thanked his Honour ten thousand times, and swore he would never in future poach a single feather

or hair of game; a promise which, I find, he has religiously observed.—Happy would it be for civilized society, could a similar policy be extended to the criminal jurisprudence of *States!*—It is only by a long course of wickedness, my dear sir, that man becomes callous and irreclaimable. There are tender places in the heart of every *young* criminal, which mildness might affect, when punishment will not reach them. Thousands also commit little breaches of the law, impelled by dire necessity, who would shudder at the idea of moral wrong, if in happier circumstances; whom confidence and lenity might save, but whom suspicion and vengeance destroy for ever.

As we reached Pentre too late for a visit to Hafod that night, we were constrained to thrust ourselves into a small apartment at the inn there, and pass an evening and night of no great comfort. The next morning, however, (yesterday) we left our quarters, and walked over to Colonel J**nes's to breakfast, who, with his usual hospitality, had favoured us with an invitation thither. You are already in possession of an outline of this very beautiful place; an outline which I have to lament my powers of description are inadequate to fill

up with truth and justice. Here all that is natural, is grand and picturesque; all that is artificial, characteristic and appropriate.— Wherever improvement has attempted to add to the simplicity, to tame the wildness, or to prune the luxuriance of the native scenery, she has done so under the direction of just taste and sound judgment. Here

“ Many a glade is found,
 “ The haunt of wood-gods only; where, if *art*
 “ E'er dared to tread, 'twas with unsandall'd feet
 “ Printless, as if the place were holy ground.”

The house, as I before informed you, is elegant and commodious, built after the style called modern Gothic; the interior superb, but convenient; magnificent, but comfortable. The exquisitely-beautiful tapestry, which furnishes a noble drawing-room, is not to be seen without admiration. We were, however, particularly struck with the library, elegant in its plan, and valuable for its contents. This is an octagonal room, communicating on one side with a noble green-house, by a pair of folding-doors, and with the lawn, by the same means, on another side. Round the interior of this room runs a colonnade of variegated marble pillars, of the ancient Doric order, support-

ing a pediment of white marble, surmounted by a light gilt railing, and forming a gallery. This is filled with cases for the smaller books, while the compartments below contain a vast collection of valuable and rare publications, methodically arranged, and carefully preserved. The apartment terminates above in a dome, the top of which forms a circular window for the admission of light.

After breakfast the Colonel was good enough to accompany us through that part of his grounds which lies contiguous to his house; the longer circuit round his farm we could not attempt, as it would have taken us a walk of at least ten miles. Much of this beautiful scenery I had visited last year, but to my companions all was new and delightful. One walk, however, had escaped me, and perhaps the most romantic of the whole, where a very happy natural circumstance has been taken advantage of by the Colonel, and a fine and surprising effect produced by it. Proceeding from a rude stone bridge, under which an Alpine stream rushes with noise and fury, we followed its course upwards, by a walk formed out of the rock, darkened with the trees that ever and anon throw their arms across the

roaring torrent. Pursuing the mazes of this path for some time, the tumbling of a cataract swelled upon the ear, when just at the point where we hoped to gain a sight of it, a lofty dark rock, rising immediately before us, terminated the view, and seemed to oppose all further progress. In this dilemma we observed, to our right hand, an excavation in the rock, of seven feet high and three in width; this we were directed to enter, and having proceeded through it a few yards, a sharp angle occurred, which we turned, and caught at once a view of a vast sheet of water, falling in front of the other extremity of the cavern, from a great height above into a gloomy *barathrum* at the depth of many feet below it. The cavern, which has been formed after a plan of the Colonel's, is very judiciously managed, both by bringing the spectator suddenly upon this thundering object, and by admitting only a partial view of it, so that the imagination is still left at liberty to make its own additions, or pursue its ideal creations.

We next visited some of the plantations of Hafod, and observed with pleasure the improving appearance of its cultivated grounds. Happily for this part of Wales, where husbandry

is but little understood, and miserably carried on,* Colonel J**nes has taken it upon a scale extensive, spirited, and judicious; keeping in his own hands a farm of nearly five thousand acres, he is gradually taming the wild scenery of this country, and rendering its hitherto unprofitable mountains useful and productive, by a system of agriculture in which science and taste go hand in hand together. His mode is rather laborious, and in the first instance expensive, but eventually extremely profitable. In proof of this, he has inclosed and cultivated ground originally not worth more than two shillings and six-pence per acre, which might now be lett for forty shillings per acre. The plan is this—he first *incloses* the tract of land intended

* The farmers of this country are, unfortunately, badly off for manure. The rock is chiefly schistus, and no calcareous stone in the neighbourhood. Lime, therefore, can only be had at a great expence; and those who use it, must be content to purchase it in Pembrokeshire, together with the culm by which it is burned. Every thing, from the nature of the ground here, depends on a liberal use of this manure; but the tenantry, being at high rents, have not in general a sufficient capital for the land they hold, and therefore cannot afford to purchase lime. What they do manure, consequently, is scantily and slovenly done; and this little benefit is soon rendered of no avail, by their afterwards sowing oats or barley without interruption, until the produce is scarcely more than the seed sown.

to be brought into cultivation, (most commonly with a stone-wall) and drains it immediately. He then lays on from two to three hundred bushels of lime per acre, which is slacked by water carried to the heaps, and ploughed in as soon as possible. He begins ploughing before Christmas, and by June gets the land into very fine order, when he sows turnips, throwing in at the same time a quantity of powdered oil-cake, a manure which he finds of great advantage to the ground. These turnips are fed off by sheep folded upon them. He next plants potatoes, taking care to give the land another good coat of manure, and afterwards lays it down with oats or barley to grass, throwing in twenty pounds of different seeds, and a bushel and half of rye-grass per acre. His object in this system is to lay down his land to grass as soon as possible, rightly judging that a grazing farm is more profitable than any other, as well as more picturesque. In pursuance of this plan, his present stock of cattle is very large: two hundred head of cattle, and from two to three thousand sheep, which will be by degrees considerably increased. With respect to the last-mentioned animal, he has tried many experiments; the result of which is, that the best

sheep for that country is produced from the *Cheviot breed*, crossed with the Ryeland rams.

The Colonel's *planting* is carried on very expeditiously, from the small size of his plants, which he never wishes to have higher than a foot; of these, a man and boy will plant one thousand in a day. The man makes a cut or notch in the ground with his spade, this, by pressing back the turf with the face of the spade, opens, and a hole is formed to receive the plant, which the boy following behind is ready to put into it. This he does, and presses with his two heels the turf close upon it. The roots of the plants are previously dipped into muck water, and finely-sifted mould.

The trees which the Colonel *chiefly* plants are larch and beech, and both, particularly the first, with singular success. He does not, however, confine himself to them, but plants of all sorts every year about three hundred thousand. Last year he greatly exceeded this number, as appears from the following account:—

300,000 Larch, from his nursery.

50,000 Birches and mountain-ash, collected from the woods.

200,000 Larch, different growths, from Scotland.

1,000 Birch, ditto.

17,700 Alders, different growths, from Scotland.

2,000 Mountain-ash, ditto.

4,000 Beech, ditto.

22,000 Wych-Elm.

597,200

The last season was rather against him, from a long-continued drought which succeeded his planting; some injury, also, occurred to his Scotch trees, from their being long on their passage, and, in consequence of it, heating considerably. With both these drawbacks, however, his loss was comparatively very small. Such is the spirit, indeed, with which the Colonel follows the laudable pursuit, that there can be little doubt of his eventual success being at least equal to his trouble and expence.

I do not apologize to you, my dear sir, for this long account of Colonel J**nes's system of husbandry; you are, I know, too good a patriot, not to venerate efforts like these, which have a direct and obvious tendency to promote the real interests of the country. You will recollect also, that it is a subject which the poet, the philosopher, the orator,* has not dis-

* Hesiod, Virgil, Varro, Cato, Columella, Pliny, Cicero. *Omnium rerum ex quibus aliquid adquiretur, nihil est agriculturæ melius, nihil uberius, nihil dulcius, nihil homine libero dignius, Cic. de Offic. i. chap. xlii.*

dained, which the wisest and best of mankind have not deemed beneath their notice, or undeserving their laborious attention.

“ Such themes as these the rural Maro sung
 “ To wide imperial Rome, in the full height
 “ Of elegance and taste, by Greece refin’d.
 “ In ancient times the sacred plough employ’d
 “ The kings and fathers of mankind;
 “ And some——
 “ Have held the scale of empire, ruled the storm
 “ Of mighty war, then with unwearied hand
 “ Disdaining little delicacies, seiz’d
 “ The plough, and greatly independent liv’d.”

After having passed a day and evening at Hafôd in a manner most agreeable, we left it early this morning, with considerable reluctance, in order to breakfast at the Devil’s-Bridge.

This spot seems intended to be the scene of perilous adventure to me, and were I superstitious, I should be tempted to avoid it in future, lest a *third* visit (for there’s magic, you know, in the number) might be productive of fatal consequences. The incidents of last year, indeed, were only laughable; the adventure of this was of a more serious nature.

Having breakfasted, I left my companions at the inn, who were busied in writing, and went to the bridge, in order to make a sketch

of that and the chasm beneath, for our friend B-ck-r, to whom I had promised a drawing of the scenery. Fortunately, I had taken, instead of my own, the walking-stick of J——n; a stout oaken staff, about four feet long, with an iron spike at one end of it, such as the guides put into the hands of those who travel through the Alps. I passed the bridge, and got on the eastern side of it, to a spot from whence I had the arch and gulph in a good point of view. The bank here consists of slate rock, or loose laminæ, giving way with the least pressure, and sliding over one another; its descent is very precipitous, measuring at least ninety feet, and at the bottom a resistless torrent boils through deep natural cauldrons, formed in the rock by the constant attrition of the waters. I had crept with some difficulty to a spot on this bank, and was preparing my sketch-book, when the faithless slate gave way, and in a few seconds hurried me down the horrible declivity fourteen or fifteen feet. The gulph was now immediately below, and seemed ready to receive me, and no human means appeared sufficient to prevent my inevitable destruction. One moment only was allowed for recollection and exertion. Providentially

J——n's stick was in my right hand; darting this, therefore, into the loose fragments at my feet, with that uncommon energy which desperation gives, the iron spike made its way into the firm ground, and afforded a support for my right foot. Thus partially secured, with my left hand I soon worked for myself a seat in the declivity, by removing the loose shale; here I placed myself, and then fixing the stick again firmly into the ground, I repeated my labours with my left hand, and thus by degrees *worked myself* up to the spot from which I had originally slipped.

I trust I was not ungrateful for this instance of providential protection, in an extremity so desperate. My powers of reflection, however, did not return to me immediately, and even when I went back to the inn, horror was so strongly marked in my countenance, that my companions, for a few moments, scarcely recollected their brother tourist.

There are two roads to Aberystwith, the turnpike and a bridle road; the latter of which follows the banks of the beautiful river Ryddoll for several miles. This we determined to pursue, and accordingly quitted the turnpike, by descending a rugged and abrupt hill, to

to the right, about half a mile from the Devil's-bridge. Here we found ourselves at once in fairy land. The Ryddoll, a murmuring transparent stream, meanders through a deep and narrow valley, inclosed by high mountains, the outline of which is most agreeably softened by extensive plantations of young oak trees, scattered over the faces of them. All is still and serene; the windings of the vale circumscribe the view, while the mountains, rising on every side, inspire the idea of uninterrupted solitude; of a spot entirely shut out from the commerce and bustle of the world. The scholar, indeed, without any great effort of fancy, may imagine himself transported into the happy vale of Tempe, the boast and beauty of Thessaly, with the Peneus flowing at his feet, and surrounded by the lofty summits of Ossa, Pelion, and Olympus. The quiet character of the Ryddoll suddenly alters about three miles from the Devil's-bridge, where it assumes the troubled appearance of the North-Wallian torrents. It now enters a confused congeries of slate rocks, the laminæ of which are nearly perpendicular, and discharges itself down a steep of fifteen or twenty feet. The best point of view of this cataract is from the

rocks, about fifty yards below it. Here the river disappears entirely. The principal object is the fall, a sheet of silver foam; great masses of rock form the fore-ground; and a wooded mountain, nearly encircling the valley, bounds the scene. Another beautiful waterfall attracted our notice, about one mile and a half further, where we crossed the Ryddoll, by a bridge, which led us into an inclosed road. The beauties of our walk ceased here; the mountains sunk gradually into sloping hills, indicating our approach to the sea, and the river lost its romantic and picturesque appearance.

One mile to the eastward of Aberystwith, we passed Llanbadern-Vawr, and its old church, the mother-church of Aberystwith, remarkable for its large and curious yew-tree. Here we had a view of some earthworks on the top of a hill to the south of the river, thrown up in the year 1113, by Gryffyd-ap-Rhys, who for some time besieged the English forces in Aberystwith. A stratagem of the latter proved fatal to a great part of his army, for on a disorderly attack which he made, an ambuscade judiciously placed by the English fell upon his forces, and according to

the historian, “ so unmercifully cut them off, “ that scarce one man was left living.”

Aberystwith is a very neat market-town, situated at the termination of the vale of Ryddoll, close upon the sea-shore. Being a bathing-place, much company resorts to it in the summer season, where they find good lodgings, and convenient bathing-machines. Formerly it was well walled, and defended by a castle; the latter built by Edward I. in 1277, of which some considerable ruins remain. In the reign of Charles the First, Aberystwith had a *mint*; and an indenture was granted to Thomas Bushel, for the coining of silver pieces, to be stamped with ostrich feathers on both sides. I have not seen specimens of this patentee's workmanship, but am told by Colonel J**nes, who has two pieces, one of twenty shillings, and another of ten, that the coins are very handsome. The trade of Aberystwith is inconsiderable; lime-stone and culm are imported; and some few herrings caught by the fishermen on the coast, more to the north, are cured and shipped here. Formerly, great quantities of fish were taken immediately off the harbour, particularly in the year 1206, when the glut was so great, as to become a

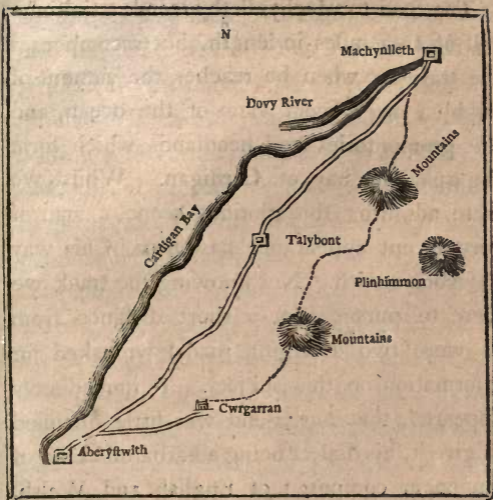
matter of record;* they have left this shore, however, for many years since, and nothing is now caught but lobsters, flat fish, and a few salmon-trout, the appearance of a brace of which on the table compels me to bid you adieu.

Your's, &c.

R. Wymor

* Powel, 224.





LETTER VI.

TO THE SAME.

Machynlleth, Aug. 18th.

THE laugh has been sadly against me to-day, and, I must confess, with some reason. Not that the cap will fit *my* head alone, since many a zealous brother antiquary is equally qualified to wear it, as you will allow, when made acquainted with the story.

The road to Machynlleth ascends a tiresome hill of two miles in length, but recompenses the traveller when he reaches the summit of it, by a magnificent view of the ocean, and the promontories and headlands which form the spacious bay of Cardigan. Whilst we were admiring this glorious scene, a man of very decent appearance passed us in his way to Aberystwith. Not knowing the track we were to pursue, (for a short distance from us were two diverging roads) we asked for information on this subject. It immediately appeared, that our friend was little qualified to give it, his dialect being a barbarous kind of language, composed of English and Welsh, with the proportion of about one word of the former to ten of the latter. We made out, however, that the left-hand road led to Machynlleth, and the right (as we understood him) to Kilgarran. You know, my dear sir, that I have an ardent passion for Gothic remains; the moment, therefore, the honest man mentioned the name of Kilgarran, I felt the *amabilis insania* strong within me; the noble ruin of Cardiganshire rushed into my mind, and, totally forgetting that we must have left it at least fifty miles behind us, I eagerly asked

whether or not there were an *old castle* at the place he mentioned. "Yes," replied the man, with some hesitation, "but Mr. Pool is not at home at present." As I did not conceive there was any need of a *ciceroni*, to conduct us round a ruin, I instantly pressed my companions to quit the Machynlleth road, and visit this precious relic of antiquity. J——n, who did not admire an addition of twelve or fifteen miles to the walk of the day, seemed rather averse to this deviation from the direct track; but I knew how to interest his mind in the object, and immediately repeated, with all the enthusiasm that I myself felt, Warton's noble poem, the scene of which is laid in Kilgarran castle:

"Stately the feast, and high the cheer:
 "Girt with many an armed peer,
 "And canopied with golden pall,
 "Amid Kilgarran's castle hall;
 "Sublime in formidable state,
 "And warlike splendour, Henry sate."

This had the desired effect, J——n and C. C——ll were now "up to the game," and quitting the man abruptly, we set off at full speed, as if fearful that the old ruin would run away from us, before we could reach

the spot on which it stood. We proceeded for two miles, without seeing any thing like the object of our pursuit. At length straining my vision to the utmost, I discerned at a distance something like an old building, and exclaimed, with the rapture of the celebrated geometrician, *Ευρηκα, Ευρηκα*: "I have found it, I have found it!" On we pushed therefore, and in twenty minutes reached the ruin, when, lo! instead of a castle, we found a *dilapidated barn*. "Well," said I, shortly after, now I *cannot* be deceived, I see the extensive remains spread along yonder valley."—Once more we clapped spurs to our heels, and, defying the intense heat of a meridian dog-day sun, laboured through lane, and over field, "thorough bog, and thorough briar," for another half hour, when in lieu of Kilgarran castle, nought was to be seen, but a small groupe of peasant's cottages, with their sheds and out-houses. By this time the enthusiasm of my companions was entirely exhausted, and mine, I confess, like Acres's courage, was "oozing out at every pore," when an old man, a cobbler by trade, with spectacles on his nose, popping his head out of a cottage door, J——n asked him how far we were from Kilgarran

castle?—"Alackaday," said the old man, who fortunately spoke English, "there is *no castle*, gentlemen, in this part of the world. The only house of consequence, near us, is *Cwrgarran*, the seat of Mr. Pool, which you passed about four miles back." The *antiquary*, you may suppose, looked a little sheepish on the occasion; he was, however, in merciful hands, who contented themselves with consigning to old Nick all the ruins in the world, and swearing they never would go castle-hunting again.

Aware that we must have come greatly out of our road, and that to return would be adding too much to our day's ambulation, we requested the cobbler to give us directions across the mountains to Talybont, an inn half way between Aberystwith and Machynlleth. This he did very minutely, and we followed them with great care for two hours—but without seeing any thing like a human dwelling. Still we kept on, and still without success; till perplexed by intersecting roads, which every step grew less perceptible, we at length found ourselves at the top of a mountain, perfectly at a loss how to proceed. Rambling on for some time, we discovered a solitary cottage at a considerable distance. To this we directed our steps,

and were fortunate enough to find the family at home, consisting of a man, his wife, and sister. The first spoke a little English; and (after understanding from whence we came, and whither we were going) informed us we had wandered considerably out of our road, and were proceeding in a direct line for the wild elevations of Plinhimmon mountains, where we must unavoidably have spent the night, had we not luckily met with him. He added, that we still might reach Machynlleth, before the evening closed, provided we pursued his directions, as it was within the distance of eleven miles over the hills.

During the whole of this conversation, we could not avoid remarking, that the women appeared to be very uneasy; but when he offered to accompany us a little way, in order to put us into the right road, their distress was still more perceptible, and the wife, in particular, seemed, by her gestures, to intreat him not to leave her. To these marks of anxiety, however, he only answered "nonsense, nonsense;" and extricating himself from the ladies who held him by the arm and coat, he joined our party. On our enquiring the cause of this evident alarm, on the part of

the females, he informed us, that our appearance had awakened their fears; that they had assured him, “ We were either travelling robbers, or prisoners who had broken from gaol; that the packs at our backs were full of the plunder we had picked up, and without doubt we should rob and murder him, when we had seduced him from his dwelling.”

J——n had taken with him from home a map of North-Wales, and a small pocket compass, and it was now we found their utility and importance. By shewing and explaining these to our conductor, he marked out what course we were to make for, since every thing like a path had long since faded away, and nothing but untrodden heath was before us. We therefore rewarded the confidence of our guide with a handsome present, and took leave of him; who, after giving us very particular directions, many blessings, and shaking us heartily by the hand, (a token of kindness which these mountaineers never fail to offer) committed us to the wild hills of Merionethshire.

Examining occasionally the map, and looking at the compass, we kept a straight-forward course, reckless of paths, descending into the vallies, and climbing the mountains as they

respectively occurred. It was, indeed, a toilsome mode of journeying; but we were fully repaid for all our labour, by a view which suddenly opened on our gaining the summit of a lofty elevation. On the right rose the broad majestic head of Plinhimmon, the father of rivers, with all his dependant mountains; immediately in front we had the black precipices and shaggy sides of Cader-Idris; and behind him, to the north-east, the sharp point of the Arran seemed to pierce the skies. The great bay of Cardigan, with the dark promontories of Merioneth and Caernarvonshire to the north, and the high cliffs of Pembrokeshire to the south, with the ocean stretching to the horizon, completed the august scene. Descending from this commanding height, we soon found ourselves in a delicious little valley, which, from the circumstances of the scenery round, we could not help comparing to one of those beautiful spots or islands of vegetation and social life, that sometimes occur in the great deserts of Africa. It was a close sequestered dale, containing three or four cottages, neatly white-washed, and covered with reeds. Through this bottom a small river, clear as crystal, poured its murmuring flood, overshadowed by

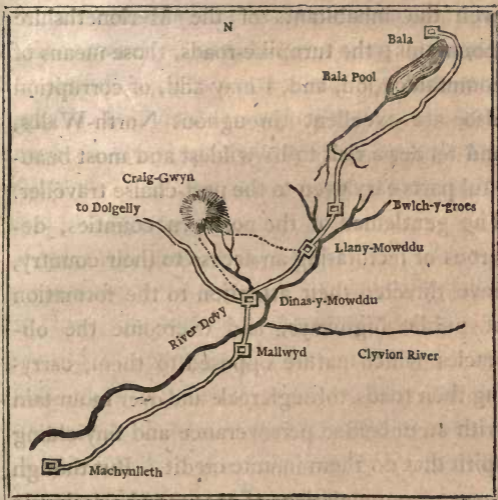
a wood of various trees, amongst which the ash, beech, and fir, formed most appropriate and picturesque ornaments. A narrow strip of meadow, through which the river ran, produced the little crop of grass that the inhabitants were busied in getting in. This labour was performed by men, women, and children, all actively employed; some of them carried it home on their shoulders, others in hand-barrows, whilst a third party filled and drove the sleds made use of in Wales, which drag upon the ground without wheels, and are drawn by a little poney. All was animation and industry. The scene enchanted us, for it was rendered doubly impressive by the contrast it exhibited to that we had just quitted—barren mountains and unbounded prospects.

In hopes of procuring more particular directions than our map afforded us, we enquired the way to Machynlleth of the villagers, but not a soul of them could speak English; we were therefore obliged to proceed without any additional information. In the mean time, evening closed upon us, the rain began to fall, and we heard the rumbling of distant thunder. We therefore quickened our pace, but in spite of our efforts, before we could reach any car-

riage track, the shades of night had fallen, and wrapt us in complete darkness. Our situation was certainly not very agreeable, as we had every prospect of spending an inclement night in the open air. We proceeded, however, but were soon stopped by the thunder of a cataract, which convinced us we were in the immediate neighbourhood of precipices and gulphs. Whilst we were deliberating what plan to adopt, the quick organs of C. C——ll caught the sound of horses' feet, and finding in a few moments that he was not deceived, we went to the spot from whence they appeared to come, where, to our great joy, we found a miller's boy, who was returning from the country to Machynlleth. We felt with additional force the good fortune of this meeting, when he informed us that we were again turning towards the mountains, on which we should probably have slept, *provided* we had not been *drowned* in the torrent we were just going to plunge into. The honest fellow brought us safely to the Red-Lion inn, where comfort and civility have made us forget both fatigue and alarm.

Your's, &c.

R. W.



LETTER VII.

TO THE SAME.

Bala, Aug. 20th.

OUR expedition becomes daily more interesting. We have entered the wildest part of the Principality, where the native simple manners of the people yet maintain their ground. We must not, however, expect to find this originality of character long amongst

even the inhabitants of the Merionethshire mountains; the turnpike-roads, those means of communication, and, I may add, of corruption also, are excellent throughout North-Wales, and render a visit to its wildest and most beautiful parts easy even to the post-chaise traveller. The gentlemen of the northern counties, desirous of facilitating an access to their country, have directed their attention to the formation of public highways, and overcome the obstacles which nature opposed to them, carrying their roads through rock and over mountain with an unbaffled perseverance and unyielding spirit that do them infinite credit. But though these accommodations of ease may be desirable to the *lazy* traveller, they will subtract much from the pleasure of the speculative one. To him, the lofty mountain, the deep valley, the thundering cataract, and the beetling precipice, are but secondary objects; for he is not so much in pursuit of *natural* curiosities, as of *moral singularities*, original manners, ancient customs, local traditions, and national prejudices, which gradually fade away and disappear, when an intercourse with other countries becomes easy or common. Much of these, however, are still to be found in the parts of

Merionethshire, which we have travelled within these two days, particularly during our journey of to-day. The scenery and manners are perfectly Highlandish, and the national language so universal, that scarcely a cottager whom we meet was able to give us a single word of English.

Our road from Machynlleth to Mallwyd, where we slept last night, followed the course of the Dovy, and presented us with many striking beauties of landscape. The valley consists chiefly of rich pasture, inclosed by lofty mountains, some of which, particularly the *Arran*, vie in point of height with the most lofty in Wales; through this the river rolls, a silent majestic stream, in sweeping meanders, ornamented here and there with several neat cottages, the humble but happy abodes of content and peace. The scenery is greatly enlivened by a variety of trees, thickly grouped in frequent masses; amongst these, the mountain-ash, with his splendid scarlet berries, makes a gay and conspicuous appearance. Hitherto we had always considered the fruit of this tree useless, if not pernicious; but to our surprise we found, that in Merionethshire it was not only considered as a pleasant viand, but

manufactured also into an intoxicating liquor. As we approached Mallwyd, a party of boys attracted our attention, who seemed to be disputing the property of some plunder which they had in their hats. We questioned them on the subject, but, as they did not speak English, received no answer. Looking, however, into the hats, we saw a quantity of the berries of the mountain-ash tree, which, to our great surprise, a minute after, the boys, having settled the dispute, began to devour most voraciously. On enquiring afterwards at Mallwyd, we found the peasantry considered these berries as a pleasant regale, and brewed from it a drink to which they were rather partial. We tasted the berries, but found them harsh and acrid; and sipped the liquor, which was still worse, sharp, bitter, and thick as puddle.

You cannot picture to yourself a more quiet, peaceful, picturesque situation than that of Mallwyd—an inclosed vale, round which enormous mountains shoot into the clouds in the form of an amphitheatre, shading it from the heats of summer, and affording shelter from the blasts of winter. At a small distance from the village, an Alpine torrent rushes through the valley, tumbling amid large masses of dis-

joined rock, beautifully circumstanced with trees and shrubs, pendent over the rapid stream.

At this spot is a stone bridge of one handsome arch, and about one hundred yards above it a weir and salmon leap, nearly ten feet high.

*see the plate
opp. Title page*

A few dwellings of the peasantry, with their white-washed fronts and little gardens, which rise out of the woods in the immediate neighbourhood of the river, and the distant view of the small village of Mallwyd, with the spire of its humbled church, enlivened the scene, by producing the ideas of social comfort and domestic happiness. It is in truth a delightful spot, and brought to our remembrance those pastoral pictures which live in the elegant descriptions of classical bards; the happy regions of Sicily, and the pleasing retreats of literature and virtue, of Horace and Cicero, in the sequestered valleys of Italy.

Having ordered dinner and secured beds at the village inn, the Crossed-Foxes, we passed the bridge I have described, in order to ascend the mountain Camlin, and contemplate the effect of the setting sun on the contiguous hills. It was a most laborious effort, but more than repaid by the glorious scene which opened on our reaching the summit. The Arran, a

mountain of peculiar form, and three thousand feet in height, rose two or three miles to the northward of us; its sugar-loaf head resplendently illuminated, while the *crags* and precipices of the adjoining mountains, in the shade, were rendered still more dark and horrible by this brilliant contrast. Behind, the whole vale of Dovey, which we had just traversed, was spread under our eye, with its river, villages, and seats, lighted up by the rich rays of a retiring sun. On each hand was “a tempestuous sea of mountains,” of different heights and distances, exhibiting a variety of beautiful tints, lessening in vividness and splendour by imperceptible graduations, till they were lost in distance, and melted with the sky.

Our host, Mr. David Lloyd, who holds a considerable farm in the neighbourhood, (a practice with all the Welsh publicans, who, by these means, are in general more opulent and respectable than the English landlords) had provided for us a most substantial meal of mutton-chops, bacon, and plumb-pye, beans, and peas, at which his daughters, two girls of pleasing persons, formed manners, and good education, did us the honour of attending. With these circumstances, and a mountain

appetite to-boot, we felt ourselves as great as kings; and agreed *nem. con.* that we would not relinquish the pastoral scenery of Mallwyd, our excellent meal, and pretty attendants, for all the luxury of Lucullus, and the costly delicacies of his Apollo's chamber.

The beauty of the evening induced us to stroll into the church-yard, when it was quite late. It is remarkable for several enormous yew-trees, of which four measure fifteen, and one twenty-seven feet in circumference. Trees of this sort are, indeed, found in most church-yards, but I have been in none where they seem to flourish with the vigour, or spread to the extent, that they do here. Their frequent occurrence in the receptacles of the dead naturally leads to an enquiry, for what purposes they should have been originally planted almost exclusively there. I believe the practice arose from either a political or a superstitious cause. The yew-tree, you know, furnished those admirable *bows* which made the old English archers so formidable to their foes; the propagation and protection of it, therefore, would be an object worth the attention of the legislature; and it is not unlikely, that in the early times there might have been injunctions to plant yew-trees

in church-yards, as places least likely to be violated, from the idea generally entertained of the sanctity of the ground. The custom, however, may lay claim to a more remote antiquity, and a very different origin. Our ancestors, in their heathen state, attributed a considerable sanctity to many trees, particularly to oaks and yews;* the latter of which became an usual accompaniment to the graves of the departed. “Here,” says the bard in Ossian, speaking of two lovers, “rests their dust, “Cathullin! These lonely yews sprang from “the tomb, and shade them from the storm.” And, indeed, it was a very appropriate companion to the tomb; since its perpetual verdure rendered it an happy emblem of that eternal youth and undecaying vigour the soul will enjoy, when “this corruptible shall put “on incorruption, and this mortal be clothed “with immortality.”

After a very early breakfast this morning, we proceeded towards Bala. On quitting Mallwyd, we passed (by a single-arched bridge) the little river *Glyvion*, or *sickly*, so called, ac-

* Keysler's learned disquisition on this subject.—*Ant. Sept.* p. 70. *Edit. Han.* 1720.

ording to tradition, from a bloody battle fought in its immediate neighbourhood. The character of this stream is so truly Alpine, that we could not omit tracing its course for nearly two miles, during a great part of which distance it rushes through a profound channel, hollowed out of a black rock by its own incessant agitation, and rendered additionally dark by deep overshadowing woods. Had time allowed us, we should have continued our walk along the banks of this river for some miles further, as the best mode of seeing the beauties of a mountainous country is, without dispute, to follow the meanders of its rivers; but we were recalled from our ramble, by the recollection that we had to traverse a remaining five and twenty miles ere we could get accommodations for the night. We returned, therefore, to the road, and soon entered the village Dinas-y-Mowddû, bedded like Mallwyd in the heart of the Merionethshire mountains.

In order to give as much variety as possible to our day's peregrination, we took the Dolgelly road for about two miles on quitting Dinas-y-Mowddû, and then laboured up the mountain called Craig-Gwyn, or the white rock, in order to see some lead-mines which had been worked

there. The shafts, however, are now filled up, the stamping-mills are destroyed, and nothing remains but the places which they occupied. But though disappointed in this particular, we did not regret having taken this additional trouble, as the scene from the top of Craig-Gwyn was not only grand but new. The elevations before us were a continuation of the mighty Cader-Idris, and consisted of those steep precipices and rocky hollows, which render the appearance of this primitive mountain so peculiarly striking. In the deep bottoms of these *crwms* were seen little groupes of cottages, with small patches of cultivated land around them, where the hinds were busied in getting in their scanty harvest; from these the simple song of labour rose upon the gale, and reached our ears in softened harmony. A fine echo also lent its magical effects to make the spot more interesting, and regaled us highly by repeatedly reverberating the silver tones of J——n's melodious voice.

After rambling for some miles on these commanding heights, we began to descend them; but so steep were these declivities, and so slippery the short sweet grass which covers them, that C. C——ll and myself (who had

not the provident care of J——n, to arm our shoes with hob nails) were under the necessity of walking down them *barefooted*. We reached the low-lands near Aber-Gower bridge, which crosses the river Gower, another Alpine stream, whose waters work a lately-erected carding-machine, the only appearance of a manufactory in this part of Wales. A short distance from hence is Llany-Mowddû, a little village in which we found only one person who could speak the English language; fortunately she kept the public-house, and had just enough of our tongue to comprehend that we wanted refreshment, and to supply us with tolerable *cworrw* and admirable bread and cheese. Throughout Wales, both south and north, we had constant reason to remark the small size of the liquid measures at the public-houses, but at Llany-Mowddû it was particularly striking. The pint, as we found by accurately measuring it, contained little more than half an English one, and the quart was equally under the legal size. This, indeed, is the only instance of unfair dealing which we observed in Wales, and accounts for the sums of money accumulated by the Welsh publicans, many of whom are worth from one to four thousand pounds. Universal obser-

vance seems, however, to sanction this custom, and does away the displeasing idea of local imposition.

The road now conducted us up Bwlch-y-Groes, or the Pass of the Cross, by a long ascent of nearly three miles. This is a remarkable feature of Merionethshire—an immense ravine of great depth and length, running through mountains whose declivities are nearly perpendicular. Along the western side of this hollow, is the road, (an admirable one, made at a vast expence within these two or three years) gradually ascending, till, at the distance of nearly four miles from Llany-Mowddû, it reaches a point of elevation which commands a mountain prospect so sublime, as sets verbal description at defiance. Just at the spot where this singular road takes a turn, in order to creep up the first hill from Llany-Mowddû, an extraordinary rock scene presents itself on the left hand. The mountains, retiring as it were from each other, sink their craggy heads, and form a sweeping hollow, consisting of beds of rock so curiously arranged, as to give no inaccurate idea of a stupendous flight of stairs. This depression suffers the eye to range into Cwm-Arran, the awful recesses of one of the mightiest

mountains in Wales. Thither we went, and were filled with astonishment at the objects before us—enormous rocks heaped on each other, vast hollows scooped by the gigantic hand of nature, their dark precipitous sides many hundred feet in depth, frowning upon the little vallies that were crouching at their feet. Whilst we were admiring this unusual scene, our attention was attracted by a feat performed by a peasant, who exhibited such a specimen of hardihood as astonished us. Peat is the fuel of the country, and is only to be procured on the spongy heads of the mountains. This the cottagers cut (with an instrument not unlike a marrow-spoon, supposing it to be angular instead of circular) into strips, about four inches square and ten or twelve long, and bring them home in small sleds, (without wheels) in shape similar to the body of a waggon, capable of containing two or three cwt. of peat. The sled is drawn to the top of the mountain by a little stout Welsh poney, with which almost every cottager is provided, and there loaded with fuel. Thus filled, it is dragged to the brow of the mountain, the horse is disengaged from it, and the man placing himself with his back to the load, precedes and conducts it

down declivities of perhaps a thousand feet deep, and which literally appear to the eye to be nearly perpendicular. Not having before witnessed a feat of this kind, we were struck with horror at it, and could scarcely trust the evidence of our senses, when we saw the peasant descending, with perfect coolness and steadiness, a declivity which we would not have clambered up for worlds, and a loaded vehicle pressing upon him; which, in the case of one false step, would have overwhelmed and annihilated him instantly.

The peasantry, indeed, in the neighbourhood of this country, exhibit altogether a specimen of singular manners. Until the formation of the turnpike-road, which I have above described, the use of wheels was scarcely known here, the sled being the only vehicle made use of. The small patches of land amongst the mountains capable of cultivation, are not brought into tillage by the *plough*, or manured by the help of *carts*; the spade being used for the one purpose, and small hand-barrows for the other. But notwithstanding that nature has denied to these people a luxuriant soil, and productive harvests, they still live comfortably and happily. Every cottager (almost without

an exception) keeps his poney and his cow, the one to assist his labours, the other to furnish him with food. Meat, indeed, he seldom tastes, but his diet is not contemptible—oaten cake, or bread made by a mixture of wheat and rye, hard cheese, potatoes, and excellent butter-milk, furnish a meal substantial and wholesome. The last article, however, is generally diluted with water, and when thus prepared, the beverage is emphatically called *glas ddu*, or *blue water*. Fortunately for these happy, simple people, the use of spirits is not known amongst them; and the high price and small measure of the *cwrrw* effectually prevent them from injuring their health, and ruining their families, by frequently intoxicating themselves even with this national liquor. I had almost forgotten to observe, that the peasant generally adds to his establishment a sow or a hog; which, when fatted, he carries to market, and sells to assist in paying his rent. These are noble animals in Wales, of a large majestic breed, and much more tame and *gentle* in their *manners* than our English pigs. We attributed this, indeed, in a great measure to *education*; for the hog in these highland regions is generally considered as *one of the family*; and is very

commonly seen reposing comfortably before the cottage fire, with the children of the peasant sporting around him.

As the evening closed, we wound down the hills of Bwlch-y-Pawl and Rhyd-y-Bont towards Bala, the moon rising behind us in full-orbed majesty, and replacing the gaudy tints of day which had faded away, by her own mild and yellow light. Before we reached the lake of Bala, night had fallen, and displayed a scene of glory that awakened every pleasing emotion of the soul. It was the night described by Homer in his famous simile, or rather by his admirable translator; who, perhaps, in this instance has excelled his original:

“ As when the moon, resplendent lamp of night,
 “ O'er heaven's clear azure spreads her sacred light,
 “ When not a breath disturbs the deep serene,
 “ And not a cloud o'ercasts the solemn scene;
 “ Around her throne the vivid planets roll,
 “ And stars unnumber'd gild the glowing pole;
 “ O'er the dark trees a yellower verdure shed,
 “ And tip with silver every mountain's head;
 “ There shine the vales, the rocks in prospect rise,
 “ A flood of glory bursts from all the skies.”*

With the addition of one more image, *a sheet of water*, the description would have been hap-

* Ως δ' οτ' εν θρανω αστρα φαεινην αμφι σεληνην.—Il. viii. 552.

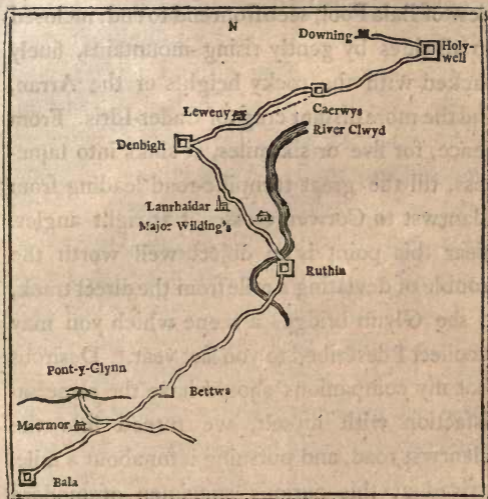
pily appropriate to the picture before us, which, indeed, was strikingly beautiful. To our left hand lay the lake of Bala, (along the margin of which we walked) stretching four miles in length, and almost a mile in breadth; its surface, calm and unruffled, reflecting, as from a mirror, the placid beams of the moon. To the right all was wrapt in darkness, by the deep woods which rooted themselves down from the hill quite to the road. The mountains, swelling gradually from the lake, bounded the prospect all around, their gloomy recesses which were in the shadow, finely contrasted by the mantle of light that covered their exalted summits.

Amid a scene like this, it was impossible to remain unaffected. Inspiration breathed around, and every object awakened to enthusiasm. Separating, therefore, from each other, we indulged, in solitude and silence, those emotions which were most congenial to each of us. I shall not tell you to *what speculations* the witchery of the picture led me; they were such, however, as occasioned a sentiment of regret when we arrived at Bala, though the Bull inn, in addition to admirable accommodations, has afforded us a dish of *gwiniads*, and a leg of mountain mutton.

Your's, &c.

R. W.

very appropriate to the picture before me which
 indeed was strikingly beautiful. To my left
 hand lay the lake of Sala, along the margin of
 which we walked, stretching for miles in
 length, and almost a mile in breadth, its sur-
 face calm and unrippled, reflecting from its
 mirror, the placid beams of the moon. To the
 right all was wrapt in darkness by the deep
 woods which lined the banks down into the
 hill quite to the top. The mountains, which
 gradually rose from the lake, bore the
 all around, their gloomy recesses which were
 in the shadow, and contained in the
 of light that covered their eastern summits.
 Amid a scene like this, it was impossible
 to remain unaltered. Inquisitive I became
 round, and every object appeared to me
 claim. Scouring birds, a few each which
 we indulged, in solitude and silence, and
 tion which few most congenial to mine of
 I shall not fail to visit again, and the wish
 city of the picture before me, were such a
 first of occasion, a summer I had wished
 to visit, and at Sala, I had the same in
 the the mountain, and the lake, and the
 its a dish of every day, and a cup of



LETTER VIII.

TO THE SAME.

Holywell, Aug. 23d.

THE town of Bala, though one of the most considerable in North-Wales, in point of size and population, holds out no objects of curiosity, and therefore did not detain us beyond the noon of the 21st, when we set out for Ruthin. For two miles the road gradually ascends, and then presents a noble

view of Bala Pool, seen from end to end, inclosed on all sides by gently rising mountains, finely backed with the rocky heights of the Arran, and the more distant crags of Cader-Idris. From hence, for five or six miles, it sinks into tame-ness, till the great turnpike-road leading from Llanrwst to Corwen crosses it at right angles. Near this point is an object well worth the trouble of deviating a mile from the direct track, to see Glynn bridge, a scene which you may recollect I described to you last year.* Desirous that my companions should have the same satisfaction with myself, we turned into the Llanrwst road, and pursuing it for about a mile, arrived at this curious specimen of modern masonry, with the mountain torrent rushing at the depth of one hundred feet below the arch; a partial, but heavy shower had swelled its waters to an unusual height, and given additional interest to the picture.

Continuing along the banks of this violent stream, which displays the same features as the other Alpine rivers I have described—rock, and cataract, and wood, we followed its meanders till it again brought us to the Ruthin road,

* See Walk through Wales, part i. p. 165.

near a village called Bettws-Gwynfylgoch. Here the sign of a small public-house, promising in plain English good entertainment for the traveller, induced us to try the contents of its larder. We were civilly received by its landlady, a little sharp-looking woman, who, with an expedition and activity we had never before seen, supplied with food, almost at the same time, ourselves, a traveller, his horse, a cow, and a party of clamorous hogs. Our meal was a sumptuous one—cold gammon, lamb-pye, bread, butter, and cheese: for all which, the good woman would have been contented to receive *six-pence a-piece*, had our consciences allowed us to “devour widows’ houses” without paying proportionately for the devastation we had committed.

Three or four miles to the south of Ruthin, we entered the vale of Clwyd, the garden of North-Wales, a rich tract of land, stretching twenty-two miles in length and five or six in breadth, watered by the river Clwyd, and sheltered to the north and south by long ranges of lofty hills. The evening was so far advanced that we could not gain a distinct view of this fertile vale; we pushed on, therefore, for Ruthin,

intending to reserve our observations till the next day.

The town of Ruthin is large and populous, situated on the river Clwyd, at the south-eastern extremity of its celebrated vale. Like most other Welsh towns of any consequence, it was formerly defended by a strong castle; of which some small remains appear at the southern end of the town, but are now converted to much more pleasing purposes than hostile ones, sheltering a neat bowling-green, formed within them by the inhabitants for their occasional relaxation. The church is a handsome modern edifice; and if the *pavement* of the streets were but smooth and regular, Ruthin would be upon a par with some of our English towns. But the general practice throughout Wales, of paving the streets with oblate oval pebbles, their sharp extremities standing outwards, is extremely unpleasant to those unaccustomed to such treadings; and a walk of twenty-eight miles had not prepared us for being less sensible of the inconvenience. On reaching our inn, we learned that the assizes, or great sessions for the county, had been closed that morning, and, as was generally the case, had been a *maiden assize*, without the trial of a

single felon. Nothing, perhaps, places the moral character of the Welsh in a higher point of view, than the infrequency of trials for capital crimes amongst them. Throughout the whole principality of North and South Wales this year, there have been but two criminals indicted for murder: a man at Caermarthen for killing his father, and another at Brecon for destroying his mistress. I would not make invidious comparisons, but, I fear, were we to consult the English calendars of criminals, we should find the bloody lists swell to a much more formidable size, (making all allowances at the same time for difference of population) than those on the other side of the Severn.

As soon as we had surveyed Ruthin yesterday morning, we threw our bags over our shoulders, and took the road to Denbigh, intending to strike from thence to Caerwys, in order to see the vale of Clwyd in every direction. We passed the bridge of Ruthin, therefore, and continued along the Denbigh turnpike-road, which skirts the western side of the vale, making occasional digressions to any village, hamlet, or seat, that appeared to be deserving of notice. Little, however, of the *picturesque* occurred in our walk; the vale of

Clwyd is too extensive to afford scenery of that description. Unlike the charming vallies of Llangollen and Conway, where the different objects are brought nearer to the eye, which can thus discriminate them, and dwell separately upon their various beauties, the vale of Clwyd exhibits a picture so immense, and so full of objects, as produces a *confusion*, utterly incompatible with that repose which is a necessary quality of the picturesque. It is, notwithstanding, a beautiful and magnificent scene, and impresses the mind with an immediate animating idea of population, plenty, and unbounded fertility. The land of this part of Wales lets at from thirty to forty shillings per acre per ann. and the general system of husbandry does justice to the excellence of the soil. Clean fields, liberal manure, small close hedges, and well-drained meadows, evince a better agriculture than is generally found throughout Wales.

Six miles from Ruthin we reached a point where the road divides, one branch diverging to the right and another to the left, the former being the new road, the latter the old road to Denbigh. From hence this town makes a most august appearance. The scite of Denbigh is a rocky hill, rising abruptly from the

vale, and presenting to the south and west a very precipitous descent; on the summit of this elevation stand the extensive ruins of its ancient castle, founded in the reign of Edw. I. by Henry Lacey earl of Lincoln. The town is built down the eastern declivity of the hill, and extends quite to the vale. We ascended the castle hill and entered its walls, within the precincts of which the ancient town was confined. A large ruin occurs immediately on passing the out-works, which seems to have been a place of worship, and was probably the church of the old town; it is the skeleton of a huge pile, measuring one hundred and fifty feet in length, and eighty in breadth. Leaving this, we meet with a very magnificent Gothic gateway, built in the rich stile of military architecture of the thirteenth century, over the arch of which, in an elegant nich, is a sitting figure, the mutilated statue of the founder. The other remains of the fabric consist of unintelligible ruins, of walls, towers, bastions, &c. Thus loftily situated, Denbigh castle must have been a fortress of great strength and importance, commanding a vast range of country, and overlooking the vale of Clwyd almost from one extremity to the other. The present town is

neat and clean, and has many genteel houses, and much good society in it.

Our road now conducted us immediately across the vale of Clwyd, and afforded an opportunity of considering its lower and flatter parts. The same appearance of good agriculture presented itself here as in the higher grounds; and we had the pleasure to see that it was rewarded by the general appearance of an abundant harvest.

Three miles from Denbigh, a noble brick building to the right, semicircular, and very extensive, attracted our attention; a bleachery belonging to Lord Kirkwall. A few years since this manufactory employed a great many hands, but we were sorry to find, that it was now falling fast into decay. The beautiful cottage of Mrs. Lloyd, near this place, excited sentiments of a different nature; an elegant retirement, the grounds, and all the accompaniments, designed and laid out with simplicity and taste.

Knowing we should pay a second visit to Caerwys, and have more leisure to examine it than at present, we passed through this ancient town without halting, and continued our walk to Holywell. Fortunately we reached

Pen-y-Bawn, an elevation about a mile on this side of it, in time to behold a scene of inexpressible glory. The sun had finished his course in the heavens, and threw the rich illumination of his farewell beams on a picture of prodigious extent, and equal variety. To the west arose "the thousand hills" of Merioneth and Carnarvonshire, amongst which the summits of Arran, Cader-Idris, and Snowdon, all characteristic, were easily distinguished from the others; Holywell lay immediately under us to the east; beyond it the rivers Dee and Mersey, backed by the coast of Lancashire. To the south-east we had a part of Cheshire, and an indistinct view of its august city; and to the north, the unbounded ocean.

We descended slowly into Holywell by a steep rocky road, and quickly saw marks of the considerable manufactures carried on there, in the employment of the women and children, who were sitting at the doors of the cottages, picking and preparing cotton for the mills in the neighbourhood of the town. The White-Horse inn opened its hospitable doors, and received us somewhat tired, after a walk of twenty-one miles in one of the hottest days we had ever experienced.

Having performed the ablutions, which, with the rigid observance of Mussulmen, we never fail to use after the exercise of the day, (and which, by the way, are certain means of lessening fatigue, as well as contributing to comfort) I waited on Mr. Th-r--by, with the letter of introduction that Dr. H——th had obligingly committed to my care. His attentions to us, in consequence of this letter, have been not merely polite, but warm, friendly, and kind. He proposed, that we should on the ensuing morning survey the town, examine its antiquities and manufactories, and close our tour of observation with a visit to the great lead-mine called the *Holywell level*.

Having, therefore, taken an early breakfast to-day with Mr. Th-r--by, we set out, accompanied by him, on our interesting expedition.

The town of Holywell is large but irregular, containing a population of five thousand four hundred souls; it has many good houses and respectable families in it, and fortunately, not being a borough, it is not cursed with those constant jars and little dirty feuds which the opposition of interests so perpetually produces in enfranchised towns. The social principle flourishes here in great vigour, and *good neigh-*

bourhood is the motto of the place. Exclusive of this recommendation, Holywell has other claims to attention; its wonder-working Well rendered it a place of notoriety in former times, and its numerous manufactories and valuable mines stamp it with much more real importance in the present day. Of local customs there is nothing particular, (since the resort of Roman-Catholics to the well has ceased) except an unusual mode of summoning the inhabitants to church. This edifice is so situated, that when the wind blows from the south or the south-west, the bell cannot be heard in most parts of the town; the parishioners, therefore, allow an annual stipend to a poor man, to notify the hour of prayer on Sundays and Holidays, which he does in the following singular manner:—A leathern strap is suspended round his neck, and a large and heavy bell attached to it, which rests upon a cushion buckled over his knee. Thus accoutred he traverses the town, jingling his bell, to the surprise of those who are unacquainted with the custom. A ridiculous circumstance happened in consequence of this practice a short time since; an honest Hibernian, who, in passing through Holywell, sojourned there a day to see

its curiosities, was standing at the door of the inn when this ecclesiastical bellman paraded the streets in the exercise of his office. The traveller, astonished at the sight, enquired of a fellow standing by, who had more shrewdness than good-nature, the cause of it, and received for answer that it was to announce the arrival of an *oyster-boat* at the well. The credulous Milesian, who was very partial to this shell-fish, instantly hurried thither, in order to make a first purchase; but found to his confusion, on enquiring for the vessel, that it was utterly impossible, from the situation of the place, any sort of boat should approach within a mile of it—a disappointment that was rendered still more painful, by the gibes and jeerings of the female attendants at the well. Foaming with rage, he returned to the inn, resolved to repay the trick that had been exercised upon him, with his faithful *shilalah*; but here again he reckoned without his host, for the wit, satisfied with the success of the first part of the joke, and not choosing to wait the conclusion of it, had retired from the inn to tell the tale of cheated simplicity.

The famous well of St. Winefrede (from which the town receives its modern appellation)

lies at the bottom of a steep declivity at one extremity of Holywell. The well itself, the shrine that covers it, and the school-room over it, were built by King Henry VII.'s mother, the Countess of Richmond, and afford elegant specimens of the rich Gothic, which marks the architectural taste of that period. The arch which springs from the well is particularly light and beautiful, covered with the pleasing ornaments of that luxuriant stile of building; figures of animals, escutcheons, family arms, form the bosses at the intersection of the firm ribs that support the roof. The spring boils up from the rock into a polygonal receptacle, with such profusion and impetuosity as to throw out (according to the accurate observations of Mr. Pennant) twenty-one tons of water in the short space of one minute! From hence it discharges itself into an oblong stone reservoir or bath, inclosed by a wall, intended for the reception of those who choose to try the effects of its miraculous waters; and who are accommodated with dresses by women living in an adjoining cottage.

The legend of the well is as follows:—*Winifrede* was a noble damsel of North-Wales, who lived sometime in the seventh century,

her father's name *Thearith*, her mother's *Wenlo*, and her uncle's *St. Beuno*. This last-mentioned relative, perceiving a certain quickness and docility about his niece, determined to superintend her education; and having obtained a grant from her father of a small piece of land, (the scite of the present well) he there built a residence, and commenced the tuition of his relative. A neighbouring prince, Cradocus, had frequent opportunities of seeing the fair Winefrede, and became desperately enamoured of her, but haughty and impatient, determined to obtain that by force, which, probably, a certain series of attentions would have put him quietly in possession of. The lady, however, resisted, and fled up the hill, on the summit of which her father's palace was built. Cradocus, inflamed with rage at his disappointment, unsheathing his sword, pursued the flying *Daphne*, and overtaking her before she had reached the top of the hill, severed her head at one blow from the body. Down rolled the head of the virgin, and stopped at the spot where the well is situated; when strange to tell, a copious spring instantly gushed forth, ran violently through the valley, and has ever since continued to water it in the most abundant manner.

But miracles did not cease here. The head of Winefrede, more wonderful than that of Orpheus, which sang a farewell elegy as it rolled down the Hebrus, had not been destined yet to close its eyes or hold its tongue; St. Beuno, her tutor, taking it up, carried it immediately to the corpse, and joining them nicely together, recalled the virgin once more to light and life.

The supposed sanctity of the waters, and their imaginary healing powers, attracted for some centuries the credulous both of the Romish pale and the Protestant church, to the shrine of St. Winefrede on the 21st of June, the festival of the saint; and many important cures are said to have been performed on the devotees. Much of its celebrity has, however, long since vanished; and, either from a decrease of faith in patients, or from the waters having lost their sanative powers, the saint is now sinking fast into oblivion, and her well into neglect. Happily, the spring has for some years been made subservient to much wiser, and more important, purposes than the superstitious uses to which it was formerly dedicated. In the short course of little more than a mile from its first appearance out of the rock

to its blending with the Chester channel, this torrent works one large corn-mill, four cotton manufactories under the firm of the Holywell Cotton-Twist Company, a copper and brass work, one under the firm of the Mona-Mine Company, the other under that of the Parys-Mine Company; hammer-mills, where copper, brewing, and other vessels are manufactured; a mill for drawing off copper-wire; a calcinary of calamine, and a building for making brass.

With all the noise, bustle, and appearance of business produced by these numerous manufactories, the little valley in which they stand may yet be called a *picturesque* scene, the only instance of that sort of beauty we had ever seen, blended with so much mechanism, and so many specimens of human art. It is a deep glen, with well-wooded banks on each side, having the Chester channel in the distance. The works are kept in such excellent order, that one of the first emotions occurring to the mind is that of wonder, at so much work carried on with so much cleanliness.

Under the conduct of Mr. Th-r-by, we began our tour of the manufactories with a visit to the great cotton work. This is an extensive and elegant building, erected about twenty

years ago, in which the raw cotton, being first cleansed and picked, is spun into thread of a texture superior to all other brought to the market. For this excellence it is indebted to the copious stream that works the mill, which, not being affected by drought, floods, or frosts, always applies to the great wheel that moves the whole machine the same equal invariable power. The cotton work, till within these few years, employed one thousand people, but the same paralyzing effects of war have been produced here as in the other manufactories throughout the kingdom, by the reduction of their number to five hundred women and children. In this work the cotton, (as I observed just now) after having been previously picked by the poor of the town, is reduced to thread, being thrice carded, thrice roven, and once spun. The process is performed by the improved cotton machine, a stupendous piece of mechanism, the first view of which irresistibly impresses the mind with the idea of magic; here thirty or forty thousand wheels and spindles are seen moving in the most rapid manner, without any perceptible cause, spontaneously performing operations of the most curious nature, and in the most systematic manner.

Nothing that we had seen, indeed, before, gave us so exalted a notion of human ingenuity as the work before us; of the extraordinary mechanical powers of that mind which could conceive, design, and bring to perfection, so vast and so complicated a machine as the cotton-mills of Sir Richard Arkwright.

We next proceeded to the *brass* works where this compound metal is formed, and afterwards manufactured. The *calamine* used in its composition is brought from the great mines which cover the top of Pen-y-Bawn, being first roasted in order to divest it of the *sulphur*, with which, in the raw state, it is combined. It is then cleansed and separated from the *lead* also, which always accompanies it, and undergoes the process of *calcination*. A *pounding-mill* next receives it, where a quantity of ground charcoal is mixed, and pounded with it. This compound is afterwards put into a *crucible*, containing alternately a layer of this compound, and another of small masses of copper; then the *copper* becomes completely united with the *zinc*, and the brass is produced. The plates procured by this process are oblong masses of metal, about fifteen inches long, (as they appeared to the eye) eight broad, and two and

half thick. These being baked, or made red-hot in order to render them malleable, are placed between cylindrical rollers of immense pressure. Entering on one side in their original size and form, they are delivered on the other reduced in thickness to about half an inch, and increased proportionally in longitudinal extension. Again they are heated, and again pass through the cylindrical rollers; the process being repeated till the plates are reduced to the thickness required by the manufacturer. These works are chiefly employed at present in making articles for the African Company, such as broad shallow pans for the procuring of salt from salt-water by evaporation; and *manillas*, small baubles, somewhat resembling a horse-shoe in shape, between two and three inches in diameter, disposed of to the Africans, and by them used as current coin, being strung on a copper wire and worn round their waists. Exclusive of these foreign articles, large pans and smaller utensils are made for the English market. The great vessels are formed out of flat sheets of brass of a circular form, (cut to that shape by steel scissars worked by water) and a proper thickness, by being subjected to the action of heavy hammers worked by the

same power, which beat upon them with such astonishing velocity as to give from one to eight hundred strokes in a minute. The utensil is held the while by a workman, who sits at the side of the battering-hammer, and continues moving it under the blows of the engine, till it has assumed the form required. A small peg then stops the motion of the water-wheel, the hammer loses its power in a moment, the intonations cease, and all is quiet and silent.

Quitting the brass works, we visited the copper mills, where the pigs of copper brought from Swansea and Stanley are again melted, cast into plates, reduced to the proper thickness, and cut to the requisite size by means similar to those made use of in the manufactory just described. It may only be observed, that the plates of copper are *polished* by the action of the cylindrical rollers, which give them in passing a most smooth and bright appearance.

This manufactory is chiefly occupied in preparing copper sheets for sheathing ships of war; and a large order is now getting ready for America. Most of the maritime powers have adopted this admirable method of defending their marine from the depredations of the worm; but all differ with respect to the size

and weight of the plates they use; Spain taking the largest, America the second size, and England the smallest. The copper nails, also, which fasten the sheets to the bottom of the vessel, and the great bolts of the same metal used in building men of war, are manufactured at the works of Holywell.

A visit to the *wire mills*, where slips of copper are drawn into strings of any given thickness, by the action of an engine, that pulls them through holes bored in iron-plates, concluded a survey of the most interesting, amusing, and instructive nature. The number of manufacturers employed in these works are about 600.

Mr. Th-r-by having, with the most friendly attention, made every necessary arrangement for our seeing the interior of the great Holywell lead-mine, we proceeded to the spot, and clothed ourselves in miners' dresses for the purpose. The entrance lies at the bottom of a hill near the town, and is called a *water-level*; a subterraneous passage, or canal, penetrating the mountain to the distance of nearly seventeen hundred yards, cut through the solid rock, six feet high and four feet wide. The water, which is a running stream, and discharges itself at the mouth of the level, forms a channel

of nearly three feet deep, navigated by boats, long, narrow, and flat, sharp at each end, and forced up and down the level by the workmen pushing with their hands against the sides of the rock.

This great work was undertaken about twenty-four years ago, by a company of gentlemen, who have continued it with unconquerable patience and unremitting perseverance ever since, in spite of the ill success which attended their labours for many years. After having penetrated the rock for six hundred yards, the workmen met with a vein of ore that produced about eighty tons, but except this discovery, they found nothing to repay the great expences of driving the level (amounting to six thousand pounds) till about four years since, when they struck upon another vein of great thickness, which they have not yet exhausted. Six men are constantly employed in continuing this subterraneous passage, who cut it by contract, having from four to eight pounds per yard, according to the nature of the rock through which they work. Gunpowder is the great engine employed for the purpose, with which they blast the stubborn heart of the mountain.

Seating ourselves in such a boat as I have described, and carrying a lighted candle in the hand of each, we entered the level, and proceeded leisurely up its stream, to examine more carefully the nature of the rock. For one hundred yards it exhibits lime-stone, intermixed with much calcareous spar; the next five hundred yards consist of Chertz or Petrosilex, quantities of which are sent into Staffordshire for the use of the potteries. At this point the rock again changes, and becomes a hard lime-stone. Continuing our voyage for one thousand one hundred yards from the mouth of the level, we reached a large natural cavern, on the left hand, humorously called by our conductor "the hotel," being the scene of his hospitality when he conducts any of his friends through these subterraneous regions. From one side of this vast hollow a passage or cut in the rock branches off into the mountain, nearly at right angles with the level. The entrance is an elegant Gothic arch, (thrown accidentally into this form) hewn through a vast bed of quartz, which reflecting and refracting the rays of our tapers, and being beautifully variegated with the tinges of sulphur and other minerals, displayed a specimen

of natural architecture that exceeded all the efforts of art. While this pleasing object occupied our attention, we were surprised at the distant appearance of two extraordinary figures, marching slowly down the arch-way towards us; the one which preceded, a gigantic form, clad in a miner's dress, and crowned with a *fur cap*, bearing in his hand a lighted torch; the other of less stature, but accoutred in a similar manner. As they approached, fancy naturally enough converted them into the genius of the mountain, and his attendant spirit, striding forwards to punish our temerity for intruding into his gloomy territories.

We soon discovered, however, they were nothing aërial, but, like ourselves, humble mortals; Mr. Edwards, the able and diligent agent of the mine, and one of the workmen.

The whole party now put themselves under the care and direction of this gentleman, and proceeded to the extremity of the level, where we were one hundred yards below the surface of the earth, and nearly one mile from the mouth of the passage. When we reached this point, the workmen were preparing to discharge *a blast*; a quantity of gunpowder plugged into a hole bored in the rock, which being fired,

tears with irresistible violence large masses of stone from the mountain, and enables them to form a passage, that could not be worked without the assistance of this powerful agent. Retiring to a secure place, we heard this explosion, which, indeed, was very awful, and might be compared to a sudden and momentary burst of thunder; the confined space of the passage, however, quickly deadened the sound, and prevented reverberation.

In order to visit the vein, it was necessary for us to ascend several *shafts*, or perpendicular passages, cut through the mountain, which pursue the ore in all its ramifications, as well as admit air to the workmen. For the first twenty yards we performed this ascent without difficulty, being assisted by a rude kind of staircase. The second attempt, however, was somewhat more arduous, as we had to encounter a shaft, *properly* so called. This is a vertical pit, about four feet square, and of uncertain depth, sometimes boarded, in other instances having only pieces of wood, fixed to the sides of the rock one above the other, and at the distance of two feet apart, so that the position of the person ascending, with his legs and arms stretched out to the utmost, is much

the same as if he were extended on a Greek cross.

But our trouble was sufficiently recompensed. After mounting forty or fifty yards, and scrambling through an horizontal passage, we reached another stupendous cavern, lately discovered, seventeen yards long and twenty or thirty feet high. The rude sides of this hollow, embossed with spar, and its lofty fretted roof, seemed to realize the descriptions we had met with in tales that amused our early years, of the palaces of Genii, or the dwellings of Necromancers.

A short distance from hence we came to the ore, a very rich vein, nearly six feet in thickness, and *dipping* down, as the miners express it, in an oblique direction towards the level. Here those laborious beings, who are content to sacrifice health and safety for the scanty gain of about twenty-pence per day, are seen busied in their horrible employ, shut out from the blessed light of day, and tearing down from the heart of the mountain, amidst dust and noise, and confusion, the fatal mineral, the instrument of fate, and messenger of death to thousands. Having remained for some time in these "doleful shades," where the infre-

quent candle served only to produce “ a darkness visible,” we retraced our steps, and with some further labour reached the level. Here we again embarked on board our boat, and having partaken of a very agreeable repast, which Mr. Th-r-by had provided in the “ hotel,” we returned at length to light and a warm atmosphere, highly satisfied with our expedition. But though we had spent four hours in the bowels of the mountain, and threaded a number of its passages, yet so numerous are the cuts which have been made, and the shafts sunk in search of the mineral, by the persevering spirit of the firm to which the work belongs, that Mr. Edwards assured us, we had not visited a tenth part of the excavations in our expedition.

The products of the Holywell level mine are as follow:—

Limestone, burned for manure and building.

Cbertz, or *Petrosilex*, used in the potteries.

Lead ore, of which there are two sorts; *galena*, or potter's lead ore, and the *steel ore*, which contains a proportion of silver.

Calamine, an ore of *zinc*, which, combined with copper, (in the proportion of one part to three of copper) forms the compound metal called *brass*.

Blende, or *black jack*, another ore of *zinc*, containing that metal in combination with iron and sulphur, and used for the same purpose as the last article.

Of these substances the lead ore is the most valuable, and found in the largest quantities. It is extracted from the mountain, and delivered at the mouth of the level by the workmen at a certain sum per ton. War, which never fails to produce individual distress, as well as public misery, has so reduced the price of lead, that the miners can scarcely contrive to exist. During peace the lead ore fetches from thirteen to fifteen pounds per ton, but at present not more than seven or eight; the master is consequently under the necessity of reducing (in proportion) the premium upon every ton, which circumscribes the profits of the miner so as to render them very inadequate to his peril and labour, and barely sufficient for his maintenance. About sixty-five men are engaged as miners in this great work. The nature of their employment is obviously unwholesome, and very seldom allows them to reach their grand climacteric. Their appearance, indeed, denotes an imperfect state of health, it being commonly pale, wan, and weakly; not that they are subject to any particular complaint, (except one) but being perpetually in the wet, and experiencing quick and constant transitions from heat to cold, they gradually undermine their

constitutions, and fall early victims to the diseases generally produced by this inattention.

The disorder which forms the exception just mentioned, is called by the patients *ballan*, and seems peculiar to the lead-mines. It is a constipation of the bowels (produced by their imbibing into the stomach particles of lead) of uncertain duration, but attended with acute and intolerable pain. The poor wretch, groaning under this affliction, has frequently been known to continue fourteen days without an evacuation, and when, at length, released, to have discharged with his urine and fæces small masses of the pernicious mineral. Perhaps, however, the unhealthy appearance of the miners may in some degree be occasioned by the free use of spirituous liquors, to which they are fatally attached. *Smoaking*, also, is a most favourite practice with them; and carried to the extreme in which they indulge it, may assist in weakening and debilitating them. The passion, indeed, extends in all its force to the children of these people; and boys of ten or twelve years old are perpetually seen with short pipes, about two inches long, stuck in their mouths, and breathing, like Chimæras, smোক and flame from morning to night. The number of workmen,

including colliers, employed in the different mines around Holywell, are about 700.

Perilous as the business of mining appears to be, one naturally expects to hear of frequent accidents among the workmen. Habit, however, renders them so expert, that *serious* casualties seldom occur. Some “hair-breadth escapes,” indeed, are on record, which, had they not been told us by those whose veracity is unquestionable, we should not have very hastily given credit to. Of these the following are most remarkable:—

A few years since a workman fell down the shafts of a mine in the neighbourhood of Holywell, nearly one hundred and twenty feet deep, and was so little incommoded by the sudden descent, as to exclaim to his companions above, who were anticipating his immediate death, “Ecod, I’ve broke my *clogs*.”*

A coachman of Mr. Pennant, also, fell down a coal-pit, with similar good fortune.

These, however, were nothing, when compared to the adventure of a man, now living at Whiteford, near Holywell, who, when a lad, had tumbled into one of these mines, of *three hundred feet*, and escaped alive.

* Wooden shoes which the common people sometimes wear.

Not more than two or three years since, the roof of a neighbouring mine gave way so suddenly, that a poor workman, not having time to escape, was instantly overwhelmed with the foundering earth. Standing fortunately at this time under a mass of rock, he escaped being immediately crushed to death; but as there were many thousand tons of earth above him, the melancholy prospect of certain destruction, by means the most lingering and terrible, still presented itself to him. When the accident happened, he had half a pound of candles in his hand; and upon this, and the trickling water that distilled thro' the cracks of the rock, he subsisted nine days, until his faithful companions, who, with an anxious solicitude that does honour to humanity, worked incessantly (spell and spell) for nine days and as many nights, at length reached, and liberated him from the horrible prison in which he was immured.

A singular instance of providential preservation occurred yesterday, also, in a coal-mine at Mostyn park, a few miles from the scene of the last wonder. As *twelve* men were following their employment in the dark recesses of the mountain, the water suddenly burst in, and in a few minutes must have overwhelmed

them all. The rope, however, by which the bucket is drawn up, happening to be hanging down at this critical moment, and the whole party clinging to it, hallooed lustily to their companions above to pull them up. Their cries were heard, and the people immediately wound up the rope, which brought them safely to the top, though it had that very day been condemned as too old and unsafe to be longer used.

Having thoroughly cleansed myself from the filth I had contracted in our subterraneous visit, I walked to Downing, the seat of Mr. Pennant, about three miles from Holywell, who had gratified me by an invitation to his house, the seat of virtue, kindness, and benevolence, as well as literature, science, and taste. The walk is agreeable, and diversified, particularly towards the mansion, to which I approached by a rural path, winding through a beautiful, well-wooded dingle.

Downing, though not the original seat of this respectable family, is a house of some antiquity, as the date 1627 in the front of it evinces. Its plan is judicious and commodious, and the situation, like that of all the rural residences of our ancestors, is low, sequestered, and sheltered. The little valley, in the bottom of

which it stands, is formed by two finely-swelling hills, that rise to the east and west, covered with the dark umbrage of venerable woods;* but which, sinking into a sweeping depression towards the north, admit a fine view of the Chester channel. Much taste is displayed in the laying out of the small but beautiful garden ground; where a judicious management, and an agreeable variety, give the appearance of considerably greater extent to this little paradise than it really lays claim to.

To see the "literary veteran," by whom the public has been so much amused, and so much instructed, in the peaceful shades of his own academical bowers, spending the close of an honourable and useful life in active beneficence, crowned with the blessings of the poor, and the love and esteem of an extensive neighbourhood, would have conveyed to my mind an emotion of unspeakable pleasure, had it not been checked by the appearance of ill health and gradual decay, which is but too perceptible in the countenance of this valuable man. Not that the conviction of his declining state disturbs the serenity of Mr. Pennant. Virtue,

* The oak reaches great perfection in these grounds. On measuring one, I found it to be twenty-one feet in circumference.

my friend, feels no alarm at the prospect of changing time for eternity. Aware that its proper reward lies beyond the grave, it does not lose its tranquillity when about to descend into "the narrow dwelling;" but like the glorious setting sun, shines with a steadier light, and a calmer radiance, in proportion as it approaches the horizon of mortality. Such, my dear sir, is Mr. Pennant, who, full of dignity and honour, as well as of years, realizes the beautiful description of the poet:

"Calmly he moves to meet his latter end,
 "Angels around befriending Virtue's friend;
 "Sinks to the grave with gradual decay,
 "While Resignation gently slopes the way;
 "And all his prospects brightening at the last,
 "His Heaven commences ere the world be past."*

Having spent a truly *Attic* afternoon, I quitted Downing with reluctance, and walked quietly to Holywell, where my companions and myself have passed a most agreeable evening with Mr. Th-r--by, our friendly *ciceroni* to the manufactures and the mines.

Your's, &c.

R. W.

* The fears which the author entertained when the above was written, have been since unfortunately realized. This excellent man paid the debt of nature about six months past.—*Ob.* 1799.



LETTER IX.

TO THE SAME.

Chester, Aug. 25th.

IT was happily in my power to confer the same satisfaction on my companions, which I had experienced on Thursday last myself, by introducing them to Mr. Pennant at breakfast the ensuing day. His noble library, and collection of miscellaneous curiosities, pleased us extremely; but we were still more gratified with turning over the many MS. volumes, which

an active literary life has enabled him to prepare for the future entertainment of the public. Quitting this happy retreat, we took the road to Flint, intending to pass to Liverpool the same day. In our way, about a mile to the north-east of Holywell, our attention was attracted by the ruins of Basingwerk (or Greenfield, as it is now called) Abbey, founded by Ralph earl of Chester, A. D. 1131. The architecture is Anglo-Norman, and the remains, which are considerable, would be, from the circumstances of the fine wood and water around, and the river at a short distance from them, highly picturesque, were it not for the immediate neighbourhood of the manufactories, which extend quite to the walls of the monastery.

From hence to Flint the road is perfectly uninteresting; and so little occurred in this town worth notice, that we heard with regret it would be necessary for us to remain there that day and night, as the boats were prevented from passing the Dee by a heavy gale of wind, which blew with all its rage. Though this place gives a name to the county, it has no vestige of that importance which county-towns usually possess, save a neat newly-built gaol;

the sessions and assizes having been removed from it for many years. Considerable remains of its ancient castle, standing on a long flat to the north-east of the town, are still to be seen; a square building, defended at each corner by a round tower; the south-east, a larger one than the others, differing from them in construction, and exhibiting an anomaly in military architecture. On the ground-floor within the outer wall, is a gallery vaulted over head, with four arched gateways opposite to each other, and opening into an interior apartment about twenty-three feet in diameter. What the design of this building might be I cannot guess, unless it were a place of confinement; which its superior strength renders not improbable.

The most remarkable incident in the history of Flint castle is, its being the scene of Richard the Second's deposition. By the perjury of Bolingbroke, and the treachery of Northumberland, he had been seduced from Conway castle, where he had taken shelter on his return from Ireland, and prevailed upon to give audience to the Duke of Lancaster. On his way to the place of meeting, however, a body of Northumberland's forces rushed upon him

and his retinue, and conveyed them forcibly to the castle of Flint. Hither the haughty usurper came the next morning, at the head of his army, and after a short feigned complaisance, committed the unfortunate prince to the care of his implacable enemies, the sons of the Duke of Gloucester and the Earl of Arundel, who conveyed him with every mark of ignominy to Chester.

The wind having abated in some measure yesterday morning, we embarked on board a packet, and crossed the river Dee to Park-gate, a passage of more than four miles. This must be made at high water; for when the tide is at ebb, its recess is so great, as to leave the greater part of this broad expanse without a drop of water in it. At these times the channel of the river is so shallow, (although at high water vessels of some hundred tons burthen are navigated up it) that passengers may cross from Flint to Park-gate on foot, taking the precaution of providing themselves with a guide. Park-gate discovered no charms to detain us, though enlivened in some degree by being a bathing-place, and furnishing packets to Dublin every week; we proceeded therefore across the neck of land that separates the Dee

from the Mersey, about seven miles, in company with some pretty Welch women, who had been our fellow-passengers, and after another hour's sail, arrived at Liverpool.

Our chief inducement in making this diversion from Wales, was to give a meeting to my fellow-traveller of last year, who had engaged to be at Liverpool as on this day, and to join our party for the remainder of the tour. Here we had the pleasure of finding him, waiting anxiously our arrival at the Talbot inn, where he had been ever since the morning.

Having rendered our appearance as respectable as we could, and taken some refreshment, we strolled through the town of Liverpool, impressed with the same astonishment as Æneas and his friend felt on a survey of rising Carthage.

“ Miratur molem Æneas, magalia quondam;

“ Miratur portas, strepitumque, et strata viarum.”

It is indeed difficult to form an adequate idea, much more to give a just description, of this wonderful emporium of commerce. On the first view, the docks and shipping, the streets and public buildings, the crowds and bustle, unite in producing one grand impression of extensive trade, boundless wealth, and vast

population; an impression which is confirmed by considering it afterwards in the detail. The happy situation of Liverpool; the safety of its harbour; the convenience of its wet docks; the numerous canals in its neighbourhood, intersecting the country in all directions; its contiguity to the greatest manufactories in the world, carried on in Yorkshire, Lancashire, Cheshire, Staffordshire, and Derbyshire; and, above all, the spirit of its merchants; have combined to render Liverpool the second commercial port in the kingdom.* Bristol has, for some time, given place to it; and, attracted by the superior advantages of the Lancashire port, the accustomed trade of the former town is daily crowding to the docks of the latter. To attempt a full and accurate account of the commerce of Liverpool through all its ramifications, would lead me into too wide a field of investi-

* In 1565, Liverpool had no more than twelve vessels, in all one hundred and seventy-five tons, and manned by seventy-five seamen. In 1793, the number of vessels had increased to six hundred and six, and the tonnage to ninety-six thousand six hundred and ninety-four; and it appears from the Custom-house books, that on the 24th of June of the present year 4528 vessels had arrived in the port of Liverpool within the last twelve months, of which 680 had never been there before;—and yet Liverpool does not possess more than a twelfth part of the trade of Great-Britain.

gation and discussion; a few particulars will convey an idea of its extent and importance. Two hundred thousand tons of salt from Cheshire are annually shipped at the port of Liverpool; one hundred thousand tons of coals; four thousand tons of lead; an incalculable quantity of Staffordshire ware from Burslem and Newcastle, of iron manufactures from Birmingham and Wolverhampton, of woollens and cottons from Yorkshire, Lancashire, and Cheshire. Exclusive of these sources of wealth, Liverpool has attracted a very large proportion of the *West-India trade*. Last week forty-five sail of these ships* reached this port in safety, and brought such prodigious quantities of cotton, sugar, and rum, † that the duties upon them already received have amounted to 140,000*l*. A great part of the Irish and American trades, also, contribute to swell the importance of

* Of this number fourteen belonged to one merchant, Mr. Francis!

† The first of these articles is chiefly sold to our own manufacturers; with the others we supply the markets of the Continent, France not excepted, who, in spite of all her decrees to the contrary, is obliged to purchase her sugars, and a great part of her coffee, from us. Hamburgh is the channel through which they pass into the Republic. Hence it happens that the present price of sugar is exorbitantly high, a considerable *draw-back* being allowed on its exportation.

Liverpool. I am sorry to add, however, that its commercial character is deformed by that monstrous and unnatural feature, the *Slave-Trade*—the opprobrium of a country that boasts itself to be free, and affects to encourage the sacred flame of liberty wherever its sails are unfurled; a trade, contrary to humanity, to reason, and to sound policy; inconsistent with all proper ideas of the Deity, and totally repugnant to the spirit and principles of our holy religion.

The public buildings of Liverpool* are upon a scale of magnificence proportionate to the riches of its inhabitants. Castle-street, the principal one of the place, equals, perhaps ex-

* Liverpool contains about 70,000 inhabitants. The number of shipwrights there are estimated at 3000; the house for the reception of the poor was built at the expence of 8000*l*. In the town are thirteen established Churches, besides one of the Kirk; three Independent, four Methodist, two Anabaptist, and three Roman-Catholic Chapels; and one Jewish Synagogue.—The Dock dues, which in 1724 were only eight hundred and ten pounds, in 1796 amounted to more than thirteen thousand pounds.—In 1670, the christenings were 67, burials 48, and marriages 5. In 1795, the christenings were 2527, burials 2009, and marriages 753.—Among other public charities, it has an Asylum for Lunatics, and another for the Blind.

A number of vessels trade from hence to the Isle of Mann; the names, &c. of which may be found in “Mr. Feltham’s Tour” to that Island, published by Dilly, London, 1798.

ceeds, every other of similar dimensions in the kingdom. It is terminated at one end by a stone building, that adds much to its grandeur, the new Exchange, now almost finished, on which, when compleated, will have been expended forty thousand pounds.

There are several conveyances from this place to Chester, but part of the expedition must be performed by water, in order to avoid a very circuitous road by land. In one of these C. C——ll and J——n engaged places, and left Liverpool at nine o'clock; while C——ll and myself remained behind till noon, and then crossing the Mersey, proceeded on foot over land from the Rock-house to Chester, a walk of fifteen miles. As the country during this track preserves nearly an uniform flatness, we had no pleasing prospects to enliven our peregrination, or make amends for the inconvenience of an overpowering afternoon sun. We were glad, therefore, to shelter and refresh ourselves with a dish of tea at the White-Lion inn at six o'clock.

Our evening has been employed in surveying, perhaps, the most extraordinary city in the world. Chester, venerable for its antiquity, the ancient colonial Roman city *Deva*,

still retains its original form and dimensions. The figure, an oblong square, determines it to have been one of those fortifications styled *tertiata castra*, a form preferred by the Romans to any other.* This was divided by four principal streets, intersecting each other at right angles into as many squares, each terminated by a *porta*, or gate, facing the four cardinal points; whilst these principal ways were again subdivided by lesser streets following the rectilinear directions of the larger ones. The whole was surrounded by a lofty wall.

The structure of the four principal streets, as Mr. Pennant observes, is without a parallel. They run direct from east to west, and north to south; and were excavated out of the earth, and sunk many feet below the surface. The carriages are driven far below the level of the kitchens, on a line with ranges of shops; over which, on each side of the streets, passengers walk from end to end, secure from wet or heat, in galleries (or *rows* as they are called) purloined from the first floor of each house, open in front and balustrated. The back courts of all these houses are level with the rows, but to

* Vegetius, &c. apud Græv. tom. x. p. 1086.

go into any of these four streets, it is necessary to descend a flight of several steps.*

The walls, standing far above the surrounding country, afford many delightful and extensive prospects, which we enjoyed from the commodious walk that runs round their summit. To the west they make one of the boundaries of the *race course*, which is a large flat tract of meadow land, in figure like a Roman D; the *arc* formed by the river, whose opposite bank rises precipitously from the stream, and the *cord* by the western wall of the city. We were accidentally informed that this spot was dedicated to equestrian amusements by the Roman inhabitants of Chester, who used it as an *hippodrome*: but what belief the assertion may claim I know not.

Mr. Pennant has written so much and so ably relative to Chester, as to leave little to be gleaned by any other person on the subject. Let me, therefore, recommend his volumes to your perusal, for the particulars of its history and antiquities. A few scattered remarks on its present state, population, and trade, are all I can venture to offer.

* Pennant's Welsh Tour, vol. i. p. 108.

The population of Chester is about sixteen thousand,* and the number of houses four thousand. A spirit of improvement, with respect to its gates and buildings, arose about thirty years ago, and continued till the year 1792, (during which period about two hundred houses were erected) when it suddenly stopped, and has not since been revived. One exception, however, to this stagnation of architectural improvements must not be forgotten, the new county gaol, a stupendous stone edifice, constructed on an admirable plan, and estimated to cost the county eighty thousand pounds. Enormous as the sum is, however, Cheshire is equal to the discharge of it, without entailing any burthen on its inhabitants; since the fund from which these expences are defrayed, is nearly inexhaustible. It arises from the following circumstance:—Some few years since a number of respectable gentlemen, aware of the vast advantages which would result from the river Weaver being rendered navigable from Nantwich to its junction with the Mersey, obtained an act of parliament to enable them to execute a plan of this nature.

* This has been stationary for some time; the increase has not been above one thousand in the last forty years.

They advanced the requisite sum, and effected the work; the beneficial consequences of it quickly appeared. Running through Nantwich, Winsford, Northwich, and Frodsham, the river immediately monopolized the carriage of the immense quantities of salt produced at these places, as well as of other articles; and the receipts upon the tonnage soon became very great. The act of parliament allowed an interest of six per cent. upon all the money advanced, directing at the same time, that the principal should be gradually discharged; and after the liquidation of both, that the future profit should be appropriated to carry on the public works of the county, in ease of the county rate. In a few years, the money advanced to defray the expence of forming the navigation was entirely paid, and the profits, in pursuance of the act, were formed into a fund for the use of the county. Out of this is defrayed the cost of Chester gaol, which will not consume much more than seven years income of the river, since it produced last year the sum of twelve thousand pounds.*

* The toll is only one shilling per ton, so that 240,000 tons were navigated upon it last year; of this quantity, 200,000 tons are supposed to have been of salt.

The trade of Chester is but inconsiderable, since Liverpool (which is in its immediate neighbourhood) has, from its advantages before-mentioned, absorbed all the trade of the western parts of these kingdoms, from Glasgow to Bristol. Its *foreign* commerce consists only in a few vessels employed in the Baltic, for the importation of timber, flax, hemp, and iron; an exportation of lead, lead ore, litharge, and calamine, brought from the neighbouring parts of Flintshire and Denbighshire, to the amount of from three to five thousand tons; and an export of coals to Ireland to the amount of ten thousand tons and upwards. Its *home* trade employs a few coasters to London, Bristol, and the ports of North-Wales. Two considerable fairs every year give spirit and animation to the city, one commencing 5th July, the other 10th October, for the sale of Irish linens, Yorkshire woollens, cottons, leather, hops, &c. and both continuing for the space of fourteen days.

The state of the lower orders of society in Chester is comfortable and healthy. The morals of the younger part are in a state of progressive improvement, owing to two admirable institutions, suggested and established by

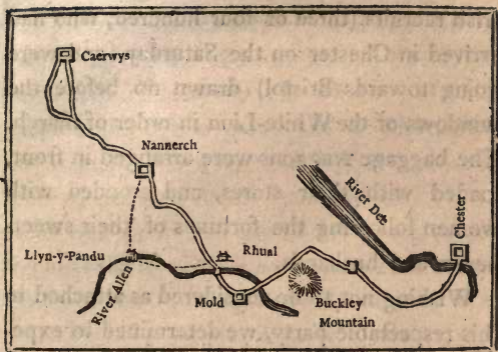
Dr. Haygarth, a gentleman well known to the philosophical and physical world; and as estimable for his philanthropy, as eminent for his professional skill. These institutions are, a Blue-Coat Hospital, (supported by voluntary contributions) for educating and training up in habits of industry one hundred and forty-five boys, the children of indigent parents; and Sunday and Working Schools, supported by similar means, and having similar important objects in view—for girls and boys whose parents are unable to afford them education. The beneficial consequences of these establishments are sufficiently visible, in the decent conduct and improved manners of the young people of the lower classes of society here; and afford an animating encouragement, to those who have the interest of their fellow-creatures at heart, to adopt similar establishments. It is to be regretted, that (in order to render these institutions complete) the proposal which Dr. H——th submitted to his fellow-citizens, of employing a certain number of the blue-coat boys in the needle-manufacture of Chester, has not been adopted; since, by this plan, the children would not only be provided with the means of a certain future livelihood, but of

earning in the interval something for the support of their parents; and lessening, by the profits of their own labours, the charges of the institution on their account.

Your's, &c.

R. W.





LETTER X.

TO THE SAME:

Caerwys, Aug. 27th.

OUR departure from Chester this morning was attended with a circumstance truly ridiculous. As we consider ourselves *fair game*, the adventure amused us highly; and should it relax your muscles, you may laugh to the utmost without hurting our feelings, or wounding our self-consequence.

Whilst we were preparing for our walk at the hour of six, we observed a party of young

Irish recruits (three or four hundred, who had arrived in Chester on the Saturday, and were going towards Bristol) drawn up before the windows of the White-Lion in order of march. The baggage-waggons were arranged in front, loaded with their stores, and crowded with women following the fortunes of their sweet-hearts and husbands.

Wishing not to be considered as attached to this respectable party, we determined to expedite our departure, apprehending the soldiers would not start till after the muster-roll had been called. Buckling on our packs, therefore, we hastened out of the house, when, (as our ill stars ordained it) just as we had gotten into the street, the drums struck up, the word of command was given to march, and the battalion setting off swept us before them with the force of a torrent. Our attempts to return were without success, the street was narrow, and all opposition to the proceeding body vain; we were compelled, therefore, to mingle with the throng, and marched on amid the shouts and huzzas of the surrounding mob, the gibes and jokes of our Hibernian companions, *quizzing* our unmilitary appearance, and the benedictions and good-wishes of the old women,

who pitied and lamented the fate of *us poor Irish bloods* going to the West-Indies to be food for powder, or to die by the yellow fever. Having paraded through a great part of Chester in this numerous society, we at length came to a spot where two streets intersect each other. Here was an opportunity of escape; giving a signal, therefore, to *my party*, we darted down the fortunate opening with the rapidity of a shot; but not without a parting salute from our Irish companions, who did not take leave of us in the politest terms.

Being fairly out of the city, we proceeded towards Hawarden, (or Harden, as it is pronounced) a town about six miles and a half from Chester, the foot-way to which runs for the most part by the side of the Dee. The country for the first four miles is flat and tame, when the noble woods of Hawarden Castle, the seat of Sir Stephen Glynn, bart. with the small but beautiful ruins of the fortress towering above them, produce a fine diversity in the scene. The mansion approaches close to the road on the right, a handsome well-built square house. To the left rise the remains of the castle, the woods and walks of which are connected with the pleasure-grounds round the

house by an elegant stone arch or bridge, crossing the road at a height sufficient to allow any kind of carriage to pass under it. Here we were much pleased with the skill and taste displayed in the management of the ruin. It is a Norman remain, dismantled by a vote of Parliament in 1645; the *dougeon* of which is in a beautiful stile of architecture. In order to allow a peep at this from the road, a breach has been made in the outward wall, through which the passing traveller can admire its fine circular tower mantled with a venerable mass of ivy. It is not so much exposed, however, as to leave nothing to imagination, or to preclude that interest which the mind takes in an object, when fancy has some room left to indulge her operations with regard to it.

Leaving the town of Hawarden, (where there is a foundery for pieces of ordnance) the country began to lose its tameness. On the right we had the Chester channel, and immediately before us the mountains of Flintshire. Three miles from Hawarden, we ascended Buckley hill, in order to visit the large potteries scattered over the face of it; fortunately we met with the master of the works on the spot, who was so good as to conduct us round the

manufactory, and explain to us the process pursued in forming the various articles which it produces; such as jugs, pans, jars, stone bottles, &c. &c. The clay used for the purpose is of three kinds, differing from each other in their power of resisting the action of fire. The most tenacious is called the *fire-clay*, which forms the earthen receptacles and stands that receive and support the articles whilst they are baking. The second is a less-enduring species, and called the *stone-clay*, of which the jars, pickling-mugs, whiskey-cans, &c. are made. The third, least capable of resisting heat, affords materials for the *smaller glazed potteries*. The mode of glazing the *second* sort of articles is by strewing a quantity of salt (in the proportion of two hundred pounds to eight hundred pieces of pottery) over the articles when they are heated to the highest degree, which, dissolving, distributes itself through the whole mass, and becomes fixed in the form of a shining incrustation or varnish. A method altogether different glazes the smaller pieces; that of dipping it into a liquor composed of pulverized lead and water, before they are exposed to the fire. Having *magnus* mixed with it, this liquor gives the ware a *black glaze*, and

without the addition it renders it of a *light yellow colour*. The articles are not, however, *totally* immersed in this preparation, as the lead being melted, would (in that case) occasion the ware to adhere to the earthen stand on which it is placed. Towards the bottom, therefore, a space is left (as may be seen every day) untouched by the glazing liquor; when thus prepared, the articles are placed in brick-kilns, formed like bee-hives, and heated to the requisite degree. Here they remain forty hours, when they are taken out, gradually cooled, and packed up for the market.

The clay for all these purposes is found in the neighbourhood, and prepared for manufacture in the following manner:—The workmen first place it in a circular cistern, called the *bulging pool*, when, whilst covered with water, it is kneaded by a cylindrical machine, which performs a double revolution round its own axis, and an upright pole in the centre, and *pounds* it completely. It is then *tempered* by boys, who tread it under their naked feet for some hours; and lastly, it is passed through fine silk sieves, to free it entirely from dirt, stones, &c. The articles are formed in a lathe by the hand, with the assistance of a flat stone,

which has a rapid rotatory motion in an horizontal direction.

We now descended the north-western side of Buckley mountain, enjoying the rich prospect spread beneath us—the vale of Mold, a fertile length of country, ornamented with woods, villages, and elegant mansions. Mold itself, with the mound on which its ancient castle stood, and the great cotton-manufactory a short distance from the town, were striking objects in the beautiful and diversified picture. The church, the only building of curiosity in the place, is of the fifteenth century, elegant and uniform, consisting of one middle and two side aisles, and a square tower at the west end. Its interior is most superbly fitted up and ornamented, exhibiting much good carving both ancient and modern; some painted glass, and a fine marble monument of Robert Davies, esq; the only defect is its flat ceiling, which produces a most unpleasant effect to the eye, and deadens greatly the sound of the voice.

Taking the road to Llyn-y-Pandû mines, we had an opportunity of surveying (about one mile from Mold) *Maes Garmon*, the spot on which a celebrated battle was fought, in the year of our Lord 420, between the Britons

headed by Germanus and Lupus, and an army of Saxons and Picts, who had united their forces, and were carrying desolation through the province. The contest is said to have taken place during the Easter week, when the soldiers of Germanus, at the command of their leader, repeating the word *Allelujah* as they rushed upon the foe, with a full persuasion of its powerful efficacy, so terrified the Pagan host, that they fled at the third repetition of it, and were pursued by the conquering Britons with terrible slaughter. A pyramidal stone monument, commemorative of this wonderful event, was erected on the spot by the late Nehemiah Griffith, esq; near whose seat, Rhual, the place is situated, which bears the following inscription:—

Ad Annum

CCCC XX

Saxones Pictique Bellum adversus

Britones junctis viribus susciperunt

In hac regione hodieque MAES GARMON

Appellata; cum in prælium descenditur,

Apostolicis Britonum Ducibus Germano

et Lupo, Christus militabat in Castris;

ALLELUIA tertio repetitum exclamabant

Hostile Agmen terrore prosternitur:

Triumphant

Hostibus fuis sine sanguine

Palma fide, non viribus obtenta

M. P.

In victoriæ Alleluiatricæ memoriam

N. G.

M DCC XXXVI.

Another hour brought us to the great object of our day's ramble, Llyn-y-Pandû mine, the most considerable lead-mining speculation in England. The scenery of this place is wonderfully wild and romantic; a deep valley, rude and rocky, shut in by abrupt banks, clothed with the darkest shade of wood. Straggling through the bottom of this dale, is seen the little river Allen, which, having pursued a subterraneous course for nearly three miles, makes its second appearance close to the lower engine belonging to these stupendous works.

Llyn-y-Pandû mine is the property of John Wilkinson, esq; the great iron-master, who has, with infinite spirit and perseverance, encountered obstacles in bringing it to its present state, that would have exhausted the patience and resolution, as well as the coffers, of most other men. With all his exertions, however, he has not been able to render it complete; the mine even now contains so

much water, that he has been under the necessity of erecting four vast engines (of Messrs. Boulton and Watt's construction) upon the premises to drain it. The steam cylinder of the lower one is forty-eight inches diameter, and works an eight-feet stroke* in a pump twenty-one inches diameter, to a depth of forty-four yards; the steam cylinder of the mountain engine is fifty-two inches diameter, and works an eight-feet stroke in a pump twenty-one inches diameter, to a depth of sixty yards; the steam cylinder of Perrins's engine is twenty-seven inches diameter, (double) and works a six-feet stroke in a pump twelve inches diameter, to a depth of seventy yards; and the steam cylinder of Andrew's engine is thirty-eight inches diameter, and works an eight-feet stroke in a pump twelve inches diameter, to a depth of sixty yards. The mountain engine has been lately erected, in consequence of a lease of ground, † of upwards of a third of a mile in length upon the range of the Llyn-y-Pandù vein, called *Cefn-Kilken*, granted

* The perpendicular height of the motion of the piston.

† By this the miner understands *a right to all that lies under it*; were the word "lands" to be inserted, he would conceive no other right *but to the surface*.

by Earl Grosvenor to Mr. Wilkinson. Many thousand tons of lead ore are now in stock upon these premises waiting for a market, the war having almost suspended the demand for lead, and lessened the price to nearly one half of what it formerly sold for. The engines also are quiet, and the works at a stand. When the bottom level, intended to communicate all the engines, is finished, great expectations are entertained with respect to the produce of this mine; as it contains one head* of solid ore upwards of six feet wide, another of four feet, and about two feet upon the average for ninety yards in length upon the bottoms.† The ore is of two kinds, the one *blue*, which yields sixteen cwt. of lead per ton, and the other *white*, which yields thirteen cwt. They are both gotten in the same vein; the white lying in general on the south, and the blue on the north side. When peace shall again have opened a market for lead, these ores are intended to be smelted at works now erecting by Mr. Wilkinson on Buckley Mountain, near to the road which leads from Mold to Chester.

* Ore at the extremity of a drift or level.

† All the lower levels and drifts.

One of the vast engines I have described has a particularly striking effect, from the singularity of its situation; standing detached from every other trace of human art, in the bottom of the valley, immediately at the foot of a huge perpendicular lime-stone rock, which rears its broad white face above the apparatus to a considerable height. In the neighbourhood of this work we picked up some good fossil specimens, a perfect bivalve of the cockle kind, and an elegant species of the astriote or star-stone, beautifully striated and intagliated from the polygonal edges above to a centre in the bottom.

A little lower down the river, and adjoining to Llyn-y-Pandû, is a lead-mine called Pen-y-Fron, belonging to Mr. Ingleby. This is drained by a steam-engine upon the old construction, and a water-wheel. The steam cylinder of the engine is sixty inches and half diameter, and works one sixteen-inch and two fourteen-inch pumps, to a depth of forty-four yards; the water-wheel works two twelve-inch pumps to the same depth. These five pumps are all in the same shaft. Independent of these are two other wheels, which raise the water from the lower workings to the main

level, communicating with the engine. With all this power Mr. Ingleby is scarcely ever able to get to the bottoms of his work, except the weather be particularly dry. Were he able to effect this completely his profits would be immense, since the mine is incalculably rich, there being one vein of solid ore two yards and a half in width, besides several smaller seams. In the few instances where Mr. Ingleby has gotten to the bottoms, no less than seventy tons of ore have been raised per week. The blue ore of this mine is not of so good a quality as the same species at Llyn-y-Pandû, owing to its containing a small portion of black-jack; of white ore Pen-y-Fron mine has but a small quantity.

The great convenience of these works is their compactness. The ore being dug, and the article manufactured, nearly on the same spot. Smelting-houses are in the immediate neighbourhood of the river, for fusing the ore, and casting it into pigs; and about half a mile below these premises is a mill, worked by a water-wheel for rolling the lead into sheets.

After a complete survey of these valuable works, we directed our steps to Caerwys, where we intended to remain for the night,

and arrived here after a walk of great variety and amusement, of which the last six miles exhibited a constant succession of the most beautiful and romantic scenes.

Having secured beds we rambled through the village, in order to discover some traces of its former magnificence; but our search was in vain. The glory of Caerwys is faded away, and nought remains to evidence its former consequence except the name, which it continues to bear. *Stat nominis umbra.* This is a compound of the two words *caer*, a city, and *gwys*, a summons, notifying its having been formerly a place of judicature. The great session or assize for the county of Flint, was for many ages held in the town of Caerwys; and it still continues to be one of the contributory boroughs for the return of a representative to the national senate.

But the chief boast of this town was, its being the *Olympia* of North-Wales, the theatre where the British bards poured forth their extemporaneous effusions, or awakened their harps to melody;

“ And gave to rapture all their trembling strings,”
in the trials of skill instituted by law, and held at this place, with much form and ceremony,

at a particular period in every year. This meeting was called the *Eisteddfod*, where judges presided, appointed by special commission from the princes of Wales previous to its conquest, and by the kings of England after that event. These arbiters were bound to pronounce justly and impartially on the talents of the respective candidates, and to confer degrees according to their comparative excellence. The bards, like our English minstrels, were formed into a college, the members of which had particular privileges, to be enjoyed by none but such as were admitted to their degrees, and licensed by the judges.

The last commission granted by royal authority for holding this court of Apollo, seems to have been in the 9th of Elizabeth, when Sir Richard Bulkley, knt. and certain other persons, were empowered to make proclamation in the towns of North-Wales, that all persons intending to follow the profession of bard, &c. should appear before them at Caerwys on a certain day, in order to give proofs of their talents in the science of music, and to receive licences to practise the same. The meeting was numerous, and fifty-five persons were admitted to their degrees.

From this period, I apprehend, the meeting at Caerwys faded away; the minstrel ceased to be considered as a venerable character in England, and our monarchs looked, probably, with equal contempt on the bards of Wales. Thus neglected and despised, the Eisteddfod dwindled to nothing, and reposed in oblivion for many years. Of late, however, some spirited Welsh gentlemen, who had the honour of their national harmony at heart, determined to revive a meeting likely to preserve and encourage that musical excellence for which their countrymen have been so deservedly famous for many centuries. This spring their resolution was carried into effect, and an Eisteddfod held at Caerwys, the ancient place of meeting; the ceremonies and proceedings of which were as follow:—

In consequence of a notice published* by the gentlemen of the *Gwyneddion*, or *Venedotian* society in London, the Eisteddfod, or congress of bards, commenced at Caerwys, on Tuesday 29th of May, 1798. Ancient custom requires, that the notice should be given a twelve-month

* For this account I am indebted to Mr. Henry Parry, of Holywell.

and a day prior to the holding of the meeting. The ancient town-hall was properly prepared for the company, which was very numerous and respectable, by the judges appointed by the above society, to whose activity and public spirit on this occasion too much praise cannot be given.

The first day was taken up in reading and comparing the works of the different candidates for the *gader*, or chair. On a subject so congenial to the spirit of the ancient Britons, as “the love of our country, and the commemoration of the celebrated Eisteddfod, held at the same town and under the same roof by virtue of a commission from Queen Elizabeth,” the *thesis* judiciously fixed upon by the *Gwyneddigion*, it was natural to suppose that the productions would be numerous and animated; which proved to be the fact. After mature deliberation, the judges decided in favour of *Robert ap Dafydd*, of Nantglyn, in Denbighshire, known among the bards by the name of *Robin Ddu o Nantglyn*. The next to him in point of merit was *Thomas Edwards o'r Nant*, by some called the *Welsh Shakespeare*, on account of the superior excellence of his dramatic pieces in the Welsh language. To-

wards the heel of the evening, the bards, when their native fire was a little heated with *cwrrw da*, poured forth their extemporaneous effusions on subjects started at the moment; which, though truly excellent in their kind, reminded the classical scholar of the poet mentioned by Horace, who composed two hundred lines *stans pede in uno*. Of these productions, the *Englynion*, or separate stanzas, on Mr. Owen Jones, of London, the gentleman who was the principal encourager of the meeting, as having contributed twenty pounds to be distributed according to merit, in prizes to the different competitors, deserve the most eminent place.

On the second day, the vocal and instrumental performers exhibited their powers; and after a contest of twelve hours and upwards, *Robert Foulks*, of St. Asaph, was declared to be the *pencerdd dafod*, or chief vocal performer; and *William Jones*, of Gwytherin, to be the *pencerdd dant*, or the chief harper.

This Eisteddfod was very well attended; the number of the bards amounted to twenty, of the vocal performers to eighteen, and of the harpers to twelve.

Several *connoisseurs* in music, who were present, declared that they never recollected a

contest of this nature to be better maintained, or to afford more amusement."

But though Caerwys is thus as it were the *focus* of harmony, the theatre where musical talent has been so often and so highly displayed, yet the circumstance does not seem to have inspired any of its inhabitants with a love for the science; since, in spite of all our enquiries, we are not able to find a person who can regale us with a tune upon the harp.

The little family at our head-quarters (the Crossed-Foxes') has interested us extremely. It consists of a widow woman, her son, and daughter; the former is a middle-aged person, with a cast of melancholy in her countenance, and an humbleness of manners, which indicate a knowledge of better days, but at the same time a perfect resignation to her present situation. The daughter, a sweet-tempered, modest little girl, about seventeen; the boy, a sprightly and sensible lad of thirteen or fourteen. There is no surer road, my friend, to the confidence of an honest heart, than by taking a real interest in its feelings. The poor woman saw that our enquiries were not the result of impertinent curiosity, and therefore told us, without reserve, her short but melancholy story.

Two years since, she observed, she was living in credit and comfort, with a kind and tender husband, and a son grown to man's estate, dutiful and affectionate, the darling of herself, and beloved by all the country round. Her husband, who had been brought up in the mine-agency business, had just obtained an appointment which cleared him about three hundred pounds per annum, and an establishment of a similar nature was promised to the eldest son. The other children, a daughter since married, and the two younger ones, were placed in the best schools of the country, and nothing seemed wanting to complete the happiness of the little contented family. In the midst of this halcyon but deceitful calm, her husband caught a violent cold in one of the mines which he superintended: a fever succeeded, and in a few days he was judged to be in danger. During the sickness of his father, the elder son, who doated on him, was rivetted to his bed; he nursed and attended him when awake, and watched by his pillow whilst he dosed; administered his medicines, and prepared his food. The physician at length pronounced that all hope was past, and the patient must die. Two days confirmed his pre-

diction, for on the evening of the second the affectionate son witnessed the expiring struggle of his beloved parent. From this moment the youth was never heard to speak; he did not weep, indeed, but the deep convulsive sighs which burst occasionally from his bosom bespoke the unutterable grief with which he was oppressed. Nothing, however, could prevent him paying the last duties to his parent, and attending the corpse to the adjoining church-yard. But reason was unequal to this effort, the solemn ceremony of interment, the weeping croud around, and the chilling sound of the earth rattling on the coffin, when the body was consigned to its final home, destroyed his poor remains of sense. He uttered a heart-piercing shriek, and started into a paroxysm of the wildest phrenzy. Providence kindly ordained that his sufferings should not be long; a raging fever immediately attacked him, and in a few days carried off this unhappy victim to filial affection. Thus deprived of her protector, and the means of supporting her family, the disconsolate widow was suddenly reduced from happiness and independence to affliction and want, and constrained to enter upon the situation in which we found her, in order to

procure a precarious and scanty maintenance for herself and her children.

During our former, as well as present progress through Flintshire, we have had occasion to observe that English is very generally spoken by all classes of society; in so much, as nearly to supersede the use of the national tongue. We were unable to account for this circumstance till to-day, when our landlady's sprightly son acquainted us with the cause of it. One great object of education, it seems, in the schools (both of boys and girls) of North-Wales, is to give the children a perfect knowledge of the *English* tongue; the masters not only having the exercises performed in this language, but obliging the children to *converse* in it also. In order to effect this, some *coercion* is necessary, as the *little Britons* have a considerable aversion to the Saxon vocabulary; if, therefore, in the colloquial intercourse of the scholars, one of them be detected in speaking a Welsh word, he is immediately degraded with *the Welsh lump*, a large piece of lead fastened to a string, and suspended round the neck of the offender. This mark of ignominy has had the desired effect; all the children of Flintshire speak English very well, and were it not for a little

curl, or elevation of the voice, at the conclusion of the sentence, (which has a pleasing effect) one should perceive no difference in this respect between the North-Wallians and the natives of England. The pride of the *Englishman* may, perhaps, be gratified by so great a compliment paid to his vernacular tongue; but the *philosopher* will lose much by the amalgamation that is rapidly taking place in the language and manners of Wales, and our own country.

Your's, &c.

R. W.

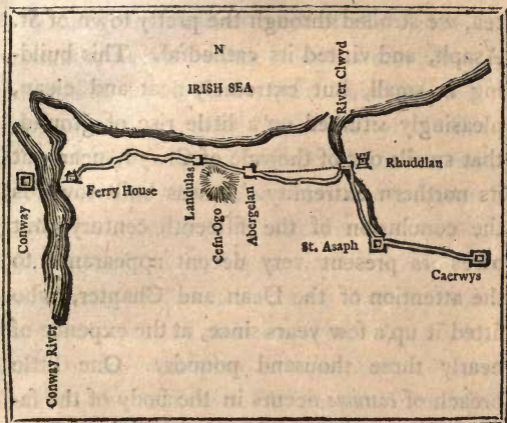


and on elevation of the voice, at the conclusion
 of the sentence, which has a pleasing effect.
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 sult between the *Delta-Whistlers* and the na-
 tive of England. The pride of the *Delta*
 may, perhaps, be gratified by so great a
 disposition paid to his vernacular tongue; but
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 mation that is rapidly taking place in the lan-
 guage and manners of Wales and our own

country.

Yours, &c.

R. W.



LETTER XL

TO THE SAME.

Conway, Aug. 28th.

THE early part of the morning was very unfavourable to us. That close, small rain, which the South-Britons with sarcastic impertinence denominate a *Scotch mist*, beat violently in our faces for three or four hours, and long before we reached St. Asaph drenched us to the skin. A brisk fire, however, soon remedied the evil. Having dried ourselves, therefore, and paid due respect to the rolls and

tea, we strolled through the pretty town of St. Asaph, and visited its cathedral. This building is small, but extremely neat and clean, pleasingly situated on a little rise of ground, that swells out of the vale of Clwyd, nearly at its northern extremity. It was built towards the conclusion of the fifteenth century, but owes its present very decent appearance to the attention of the Dean and Chapter, who fitted it up a few years since, at the expence of nearly three thousand pounds. One little breach of *costume* occurs in the body of the fabric, the stone figure of a bishop of the 16th century, who has been taken from his horizontal cumbent position, in which he reposed very soundly, and once more *set upon his legs* after a sleep of two hundred and eighty years! A grand view presents itself from the top of the tower, embracing the whole extent of the vale of Clwyd, the neighbouring mountains, and unbounded ocean. The more immediate objects are of the most pleasing kind—the bishop's palace, built by the present prelate, an elegant but modest stone edifice, with much taste and a great deal of comfort around it. The *deanery*, also, has its attractions in more ways than one.

Pursuing the western bank of the river for two miles, we reached the bridge of Rhuddlan, and crossing it, entered a town which was formerly one of the most respectable of North-Wales, but has now no trace of its ancient importance save the ruins of its castle. Situated on an eminence at the northern extremity of the vale of Clwyd, the sagacity of Edward I. easily discovered that a fortress built on the spot would prove a most important assistance to him in the great plan he was about to undertake—the conquest of Wales; and accordingly, having taken possession of the place, he erected the present castle, (a strong square building) and made Rhuddlan the depôt of his stores, and the rendezvous of his army employed in this expedition. In grateful remembrance of the service which Rhuddlan had proved to him, Edward, after the subjugation of the Welsh, made the town a free borough, and conferred several very important privileges upon it. Here too he assembled a parliament in 1283, in which all the regulations relative to his new conquest were framed and established, and which being properly systematized and arranged, were passed into a

statute, still known by the name of the Statute of Rhuddlan.

A bridle causeway, four or five miles in length, leads the traveller across Morfa-Rhuddlan, or the Marsh of Rhuddlan, better known as being the name of a most pathetic air, one of the finest specimens of old Welsh harmony. This tune is an *epicedion*, composed by the bards on the death of Prince Caradoc, who was killed in a desperate battle fought on this spot between the English and Welsh in the year 795.* Nothing can be more plaintive, solemn, and simple, than the measures of this tune; they always bring to my recollection the lamentations of Fingal on the death of his son, when the bards of the hero awoke their harps in praise of the deceased, and poured out their griefs in song.

“ Art thou fallen, O Oscar, in the midst of
 “ thy course? The heart of the aged beats over
 “ thee! He sees thy coming wars! The wars
 “ which ought to come, he sees! They are cut
 “ off from thy fame! When shall joy dwell

* To celebrate the actions of the slaughtered chieftain was one great duty of the ancient bards.—Celtæ hymnorum suorum argumentum faciunt, viros qui in præliis fortiter pugnantes occubuerunt.—*Ælian. Var. Hist. lib. xii.*

“ at Selma? When shall grief depart from
 “ Morven! My sons fall by degrees; Fingal is
 “ the last of his race. My fame begins to
 “ pass away. Mine age will be without friends.
 “ I shall sit a grey cloud in my hall. I shall
 “ not hear the return of a son in his sounding
 “ course. Weep, ye heroes of Morven! Never
 “ more shall Oscar rise!”

The little bathing town of Abergelan af-
 farded us some excellent London porter and
 Shropshire cheese. Whilst we were enjoying
 this repast, mine host, who seemed to regard
 our attacks upon his loaf with some astonish-
 ment, after begging pardon for making so
 bold, requested to know whether we were of
 “ *the party.*” The expression was of so *Proteus-*
like a nature, (particularly in these days of dif-
 ference and division) that we did not at all
 understand him, I therefore desired he would
 explain himself. “ Why, gentlemen,” re-
 turned he, “ I wished to be informed whe-
 “ ther you belonged to the set of *strolling players*
 “ who are lately gone to Bangor, because, if
 “ you had, I would have troubled one of you
 “ with an *old shirt* which a *gentleman of the party*
 “ left behind him instead of his reckoning,
 “ when he passed through here.” We had

already been taken for militia-men, plunderers, and recruits, but had no idea of the honour that awaited us, of being ranked amongst the itinerant sons of Thespis.

The mountains now began to approach the road to the left hand; but one more remarkable than the rest particularly engaged our attention. It is a huge calcareous rock, about a mile from Abergelan, called Cefn-Ogo, or the bank of the cavern;—an inexhaustible mine of lime-stone, where a multitude of labourers are constantly employed in blasting the rock, and breaking the masses for exportation. But what chiefly renders it curious is, the circumstance of a number of natural caverns penetrating its side in different places; one of which, called *Ogo*, or the cavern, (*κατ' ἐξοχην*) is well worth a visit. To this C. C---ll and I scrambled up with much difficulty, but had no reason to regret the toil of ascending. Its mouth resembles the huge arched entrance of a Gothic cathedral. A few feet within this, and immediately in the centre of it, a rock rising from the floor to the lofty roof, not unlike a massive pillar rudely sculptured, divides the cavern into two apartments. The hollow to the left soon terminates; but that to

the right spreads into a large chamber thirty feet in height, and stretching to an uncertain depth, as human curiosity has never been hardy enough to attempt ascertaining it. Making a sharp turn a few yards from the entrance, and sweeping into the interior of the mountain, the form and dimensions of this abyss are concealed in impenetrable darkness; we could only follow its windings, therefore, about forty yards with prudence, as the light here totally deserted us, and the flooring became both dirty and unsafe. Stalactites of various fanciful forms decorate the fretted roof and sides of this extraordinary cavern, the entrance of which commands a view surprisingly grand and extensive.

Descending to our companions, we strolled quietly on to the passage-house on the eastern side of the Conway river, through a bold picturesque country, enjoying the glorious tints of a fine evening, gradually succeeding each other till they were lost in the mild radiance of the moon;

“ Who now rose mellowing the grey rocks, and play'd
 “ On the still sea.”

Arriving at length at the passage-house, we discovered the tide was out, and that we could

not get to Conway unless we chose to cross the sands to the channel of the river, about three quarters of a mile distant, where a boat was in waiting to receive passengers. On our expressing some doubts as to the safety of this expedition at night and without a guide, the man at the passage observed, with a sarcastic grin, that if we were expeditious we should overtake a party who would act both as guides and protectors to us—three *old women* crossing to Conway with butter and eggs. Ashamed of being thought unequal to any undertaking of these antiquated females, we immediately pursued the direction they had taken; but, notwithstanding our expedition, could not reach them before they had crossed the brook in the sands, by wading through it, after pulling off their stockings and shoes, and tucking up their petticoats to the middle. Here our courage failed us; we enquired, therefore, of these amphibious ladies whether or not there were a safer place for crossing the brook. They answered, that a quarter of a mile lower down it might be avoided entirely, but desired us to make haste, as the tide was rapidly coming in. Following their direction, we soon found ourselves in the midst of a wild waste of sand,

which, thrown into ridges by the undulation of the water, had the appearance of a solid sea. The light of the moon, not sufficient to render any of the surrounding objects visible, reflected a faint ray upon this expanse alone, which gave an air of desolation to it that filled the imagination with the most awful fancies. Nor were these dissipated by the conviction of real danger, arising from the treachery of the sands, which occasionally gave way under our feet, and the flowing tide that closely followed our footsteps. At length, with considerable difficulty, we gained the boat, were ferried to Conway, and soon reached our old quarters—the “Bull’s-Head;” where the same fair damsels who honoured us with their attendance last year, have just covered our table with a plentiful repast.

Your’s, &c.

R. W.

which, thrown into relief by the illumination of
the water, had the appearance of a solid sea.
The light of the moon, not sufficient to render
any of the surrounding objects visible, reflected
a faint ray upon this expansive zone, which
gave an air of desolation to it that filled the
imagination with the most awful fancies.
There were three situated by the coast
of redoubt, arising from the presence of
the rocks, which occasionally gave way under
our feet, and the howling tide that closely fol-
lowed our footsteps. At length, with consi-
derable difficulty, we gained the boat, were
turned to Norway, and soon reached our old
quarters—the "Bull's Head," where the same
fair hands who honoured us with their at-
tendance last year, have just covered our table
with a plentiful feast.

Y
M



LETTER XII.

TO THE SAME.

Caernarvon; Sept. 1st.

YOU have already accompanied me from Conway to Bangor, and been introduced to Mr. Hutchings at the Three Eagles. Here we slept on the 29th, and the ensuing day crossed the Menai in order to visit Anglesey. Several ferries ply on this trajectus; we fortunately took that of Garth-Point, about half a

mile from Bangor, which afforded us a very curious and singular character. It is worked by an old woman, by name Grace Parry, but more commonly called, from the place of her abode, Gras-y-Garth; a short, thick, squat female, who, though upwards of sixty winters have passed over her head, is as strong as a horse, and as active as one of her own country goats. Her excellence in rowing and managing a boat is unrivalled through the coast, but cannot be wondered at, as she served an early apprenticeship to the business, under her father and mother, who lived at the same little cottage which she inhabits, and worked the same passage for the better part of the past century. The prowess of her mother, and the skill of her father, are still the favourite themes of her discourse. She remembers with particular pleasure his ability in *swimming*, (for he seems to have been nearly an amphibious animal) and, as a proof of it, relates a circumstance that frequently occurred, even when he had passed his grand climacteric. The ferry was generally plied by the joint exertions of this couple, who, upon the whole, were tolerably *loving*; but as storms will happen in the fairest days, so their conjugal serenity was

occasionally disturbed; and sometimes an altercation would take place when they were ferrying their passengers across the Menai. In these cases, the wife, who was the *better man* of the two, so completely worsted her spouse in obloquy and abuse, that, unable to bear it, he would suddenly cast off his jacket, leap into the Menai, and swim towards his cottage, bidding his dame, with a string of Welsh execrations, take care of the passengers herself. Grace, indeed, seems to have imbibed much of her mother's *noble spirit*; and looks down with some contempt on our sex, whom she considers as inferior animals, and regards only as necessary evils. She has long been married, 'tis true, but seldom allows her husband to assist her in the important avocations of rowing and fishing; because, as she frankly told us, *he could not do it half so well as herself*. Nothing intimidates this Cambrian heroine; she stands in fear of no human being, and is equally regardless of the rage of the elements. Last winter her *boat* drifted away in the night, and Grace for some days thought it had been stove to pieces. However, as it was her *freehold estate*, she made diligent enquiry after it, and at length discovered that it had been ta-

ken up and carried to Liverpool. Engaging a stout fellow in the neighbourhood to accompany her, she instantly set off for this port on foot, though nearly sixty miles distant, and having recovered her property, embarked on board the skiff, (not more than twelve or thirteen feet on the keel) and with the assistance of her companion, actually rowed it back to Garth-Point, through heavy seas and squally weather, as perilous a voyage as ever was performed.

As we found Grace's prejudices against the English were rather violent, and not knowing to what length they might carry her, particularly when she was under the influence of *ctwrrw da*, we thought it necessary, for the safety of future Saxon travellers, to reward her labours with double the sum she demanded. This unexpected generosity so gratified the old woman, that she swore most bitterly we were the *greatest gentlemen* she ever met with; she declared, she should always like the English for our sake, and insisted upon shaking hands with us individually at parting. We indulged her wish, but (whether she meant it as a token of her kindness, or a proof of her strength, I

know not) gave us each such a serious *gripe* as almost dislocated our fingers.

We now trod the sacred ground of *Mona*, the holy-land of the ancient Britons, the great school of Druidism, so often stained by the bloody rites of a superstition the most dreadful and powerful that ever enchained the human mind. Anglesey, you know, was indebted to Suetonius Paulinus, the Roman leader, for its deliverance from this terrible scourge; the extinction of which was attended, according to the historian, with an appropriate scene of horror and confusion, the conquerors firing the consecrated groves, and slaying the bloody priests on the same altars which had formerly smoked with the blood of their human victims.

Winding up the declivity which rises over the Menai, we took a path across the fields to Beaumaris, the handsomest and best-built town in Anglesey. The noble remains of a castle built by the conqueror of Wales stand to the eastward of the town, famous for its spacious hall and elegant chapel. Above the town is Baron-Hill, the seat of Lord Bulkley, boasting one of the finest situations in the world; comprising the stupendous chain of the Caernar-

vonshire mountains, ending in the huge promontory of Pen-mawn-maur, islands and headlands, straits and oceans. With these grand objects before the eye, one is naturally hurt at a little ornament in the neighbourhood of the house, stuck upon the point of a hill, of a castellated shape, and intended for a banqueting or tea-drinking house; an object in itself insignificant, but particularly contemptible from the circumstance of its situation, which is just over the majestic ruins of Edward's mighty fortress.

Having received directions to Plâs-Gwyn, the seat of Mr. Panton, we pursued our walk for five miles through a country rather uninteresting from its uniform flatness and want of trees. This scene, however, was agreeably relieved when we reached the neighbourhood of Plâs-Gwyn. The house, a well-built brick mansion, stands rather low, embosomed in woods; but the land around it undulates agreeably, and when laid out according to the judicious plan of the respectable owner, will exhibit a pleasing range of diversified and tasty pleasure-grounds.

Understanding that we wished to survey the Parys-Mine, Mr. Panton favoured us with di-

rections to Amlwch, about eighteen miles distant from Plàs-Gwyn, together with an introduction to the Rev. Mr. Mealey of that town; a gentleman of great information, and the most liberal communication. With these assistances we continued our walk, after promising to return to the hospitable mansion on the ensuing day.

Our route led us through a country wild and forlorn, thinly inhabited, and bare of wood; the husbandry of the most negligent sort, fields choaked with weeds, meadows without drains, and soil without manure. We were more particularly struck with the absence of trees, having naturally enough supposed that the former scene of Druidical superstition, the horrors of which were carried on in the dark recesses of consecrated groves, would not be totally destitute of wood. Nor did Anglesey always wear this naked appearance. Classical authors tell us it had its venerable woods, and the ancient British appellation *Ynis-Dywyl*, or the dark island, intimates the same fact. The word *llwyn*, (grove) also, is a common adjunct to the names of many places through the island; and bodies of trees are constantly met with in the pits from which the inhabitants get their

peat. The scantiness of population, the imperfect intercourse of the villagers with each other, and the infrequency of travelling in this quarter of Anglesey, was singularly exemplified in an accident that happened to myself as we were passing on to Amlwch. About eight miles from Mr. Panton's I sat down on a bank by the road-side, to insert some observations in my memorandum-book, and having finished them, hastened after my companions. Proceeding nearly three miles further, I had occasion to make other minutes, when feeling in my pocket for the book, I discovered, to my confusion, that it was lost. Nothing remained but to return to the spot where I had taken it out. This I did with a palpitating heart, and little hopes of regaining it. But my joy scarcely equalled my surprise, when I saw the case (which was a large one) and its contents, lying in a very conspicuous place by the side of the road, although upwards of two hours had elapsed since I left it on the spot.

On returning to my companions, I found them regaling at a small public-house on *cwrrw* and *wigs*. The latter is a species of *muffin*, rather larger than ours, but to the full as light and agreeable. They are common all over North

Wales, and are really a good substitute for *bread*, which is very coarse and black. The *oaten-cakes*, though eaten with avidity by the Welsh, are to south-country Englishmen by no means palatable.

As it was necessary for us to see Mr. Mealey before our visit to the Parys mountain, we left the mines on our right and made for Amlwch, a sea-port in the north-eastern corner of Anglesey. Originally nothing more than a small fishing-town, its present consequence arises entirely from the connection it has with the great copper-mines in its neighbourhood, which have within five and thirty years increased its population from two hundred to five thousand.* Of these, by far the greater part consists of the families of the workmen employed in the mountain and smelting-houses, who amount together to about thirteen hundred. They are a remarkably decent and orderly race of people—the men healthy and strong; the women tall and robust, with fine countenances, sparkling black eyes, and teeth like ivory.

The port of Amlwch is an excavation out of the solid rock, sufficiently large to receive

* The population of Anglesey is estimated at twenty-five thousand; the parish of Amlwch reckons about five thousand, and that of Holyhead two thousand.

thirty vessels of two hundred tons burthen, made at the expence of the Anglesey Copper Companies for the convenience of their shipping. At high-water vessels of the above-mentioned tonnage can lie close to the quay, and receive the ore and metal for exportation; but when the ebb takes place, the port is dry. The comfortable house of Mr. Stephen Rouse, an agent to the mines, received us in the evening. It has no sign, or other indication of an inn, but accommodates, notwithstanding, any decent traveller.

On the ensuing morning, after an early breakfast, of which Mr. Mealey did us the favour to partake, we left Amlwch to visit the Parys mountain, and survey the mines. This vast natural acervation of mineral, which measures a mile in length and half a mile over, rises to the south-east of the town at something less than two miles from it. Its appearance is waste, wild, and barren in the extreme; not a vestige of green is seen on its parched and scarified surface, all vegetation being precluded by the sulphureous fumes which arise from the roasting heaps and smelting-houses, and extend their destructive effects for miles around. Various opinions are entertained as

to the origin of its name; but etymologists will, perhaps, give a preference to that which derives it from the ancient Celtic word *praas*, brass or precious metal. The adoption of this opinion, however, naturally leads to the idea that the riches of this mountain were known to and extracted by the ancient British; nor should we, probably, be far from the truth, were we to admit this supposition. Our ancestors, as we are informed by an unquestionable authority, worked the mines of this country, and exchanged their produce for various articles of foreign commerce.* The instruments they made use of in Anglesey, for this purpose, are frequently found in and near the mountain—smooth, oval stones, (their ends splintered and fractured) with which they broke the masses of ore, after having separated them from the parent rock, by heating it intensely, and then pouring water or vinegar upon the ignited part. The Romans, also, who, according to Pliny,† descended into the bowels of the earth, and visited the habitations of the *Manes* in search of riches,‡ would

* Strabo, lib. iii. p. 265.

† Pliny, lib. xxxiii. c. 4.

‡ Imus in viscera ejus et in sedes manium opes quærimus. Lib. xxxiii. Proëm.

not neglect so valuable a source of them as Parys mountain, particularly if they found it opened to their hands by the people they had subdued. How long a time elapsed after the Roman period, before this vast bed of mineral was again worked, is uncertain, as nothing occurs relative to it till the sixteenth century. In the reign of Elizabeth, one branch of whose extensive policy was an attention to the mines of her kingdom, those of Parys mountain were granted to certain patentees in order to be worked, as the original documents remaining in a gentleman's possession sufficiently prove. After this time they seem to have slumbered in neglect and oblivion for a century and a half, when an accidental circumstance again brought them into notice, and poured a flood of unexpected riches upon the fortunate proprietors of the disregarded property. The fact is thus related by Mr. Pennant, whose account is, as we are informed, accurate in every particular. P. 266.

“ In the year 1762, one Alexander Frazier
 “ came into Anglesey in search of mines. He
 “ visited Parys mountain; called on Sir Ni-
 “ cholas Bayley, and gave him so flattering an
 “ account of the prospect, as induced him to

“ make a trial, and sink shafts. Ore was
 “ discovered; but before any quantity could be
 “ gotten, the mines were overpowered with
 “ water. In about two years after, Messrs.
 “ Roc and Co. of Macclesfield, applied to Sir
 “ Nicholas for a lease of Penrhyn-ddu mine in
 “ Caernarvonshire, with which they were,
 “ much against their wills, compelled to take
 “ a lease of part of this mountain, and to carry
 “ on a level and make a fair trial. The trial
 “ was accordingly made; ore was discovered,
 “ but the expences overbalanced the profits.
 “ They continued working to great loss, and
 “ at length determined to give the affair up.
 “ They gave their agent orders for that purpose;
 “ but he, as a final attempt, divided his men
 “ into ten several companies, of three or four
 “ in a partnership, and let them sink shafts in
 “ various places, about eight hundred yards
 “ eastward of a place called the *Golden Venture*,
 “ on a presumption that a spring, which issued
 “ from near the place, must come from a body
 “ of mineral. His conjecture was right; for in
 “ less than two days they met with, at the
 “ depth of seven feet from the surface, the solid
 “ mineral, which proved to be that vast body
 “ which has since been worked to such advan-

“ tage. The day that this discovery was made
 “ was March 2d, 1768, which has ever since
 “ been observed as a festival by the miners.
 “ Soon after this discovery, another adventure
 “ was begun by the Rev. Mr. Edward Hughes,
 “ owner of part of the mountain, in right of
 “ his wife, Mary Lewis, of Llys-Dinas.”

This invaluable estate is divided between the Earl of Uxbridge, son of the late Sir Nicholas Bayley; the Rev. Mr. Hughes, who about thirty years since lived upon a small curacy in the eastern corner of Anglesey; and Mr. Williams, formerly an attorney in North-Wales. The Earl has one moiety of the whole mountain, and an estate in common with Mr. Hughes in the remaining moiety. Under these proprietors Mr. Williams is a lessee.

Our first visit was to the *Mona* mine, as it is called, the property of Lord Uxbridge, of which language is utterly inadequate to convey a distinct idea. Unlike all the mines we had hitherto seen, the wonders of this abyss are not concealed by a superficial crust of earth, but all is open to the day. The bowels of the mountain are literally torn out, and the mighty ruin lies subject to the eye. Standing on the edge of the excavation, the spectator beholds an

awful range of huge caverns, profound hollows, stupendous arches, gloomy passages, and enormous masses of rock, not improperly compared by our friend J——n to the cave of Cacus, after Hercules had exposed the secret recesses of his subterraneous retreat to the light of the sun.

——“ Specus, et Caci detecta apparuit ingens
“ Regia, et umbrosæ penitus patuère cavernæ.”

Amid this striking scenery the miners may be observed engaged in their curious, but perilous occupations. Some sticking to the sides of the rock, or seated on the narrow ledges of precipices, which gape beneath them to the depth of one or two hundred feet, tearing the ore from the mountain, and breaking it into smaller masses; others boring the rock in order to blast it; whilst a third party were literally *hanging* over the abyss below them, drawing up and lowering down the ore buckets, supported only by a frame of wood-work, which quivers like an aspen leaf with the operation carrying on upon it. Whilst contemplating this very unusual sight, we heard, ever and anon, loud explosions “ rattling through the dark profound,” occasioned by the discharge of the gunpowder used in separating the ore from the mountain. These reports varied, increased, and multiplied

amongst the passages and caverns of the abyss, completed the effect; and united with the scene of rocky ruin below us, excited the idea of the final consummation of all things—of nature sinking into universal wreck.

Nor, indeed, are the impressions of alarm arising from this view of the Parys mountain mines altogether causeless, since accidents frequently happen amongst them, from the foundering of the rock, the unexpected explosions of the blast, the treachery of the ropes, and the giving way of the wooden frame-work. But notwithstanding these common instances of destruction, (which, we are told, amount to ten or twelve in a year) the people employed follow their several occupations amid noise and confusion, danger and horror, with a degree of incaution and fearlessness that perfect security can hardly authorise.

The excavations, of which I have thus attempted to give you an outline, are some of them above three hundred feet deep; the body of ore being found to extend thus low, and in general increasing in value the deeper it descends. From this great depth, and, probably, far beyond it, the mineral rises within a few feet of the surface, where it is covered by a

crust, composed of a little earth and about two yards of an ochrey substance, called by the miners the *red crust*. The minerals which this vast bed contains are as follow:—

1. *The yellow sulphurated, copper ore*:
2. *Native copper*, rarely found, and in small quantities.
3. *Sulphate of copper*, both crystalized and in solution.
4. *Sulphate of lead*, containing a considerable proportion of silver.
5. *Black ore*, containing copper mixed with galena, calamine, and a small quantity of silver.*
6. *Native sulphur*.

Large masses of ore being separated from the mountain by means of gunpowder, they are afterwards broken into lumps, from one to two pounds in weight, and shipped in that state for Liverpool and Swansea. The larger part is carried to the former port, and goes from thence to Ravenhead, near Prescot, to be smelted. Such as is exported to Swansea is smelted in the great works belonging to the

* Mr. Arthur Aiken, in his valuable little volume, "A Journal of a Tour through North-Wales," mentions *malachite*, or green and blue carbonate of copper, amongst the products of the Parys mountain; but here he seems (what very rarely happens to him) to be under a mistake, since I am informed by gentlemen of great mineralogical knowledge, who live in the neighbourhood of these mines, that the *malachite* is never found there; and the *black ore* so rarely, as scarcely to deserve a place in the list of the products of the Parys mountain.

Parys-Mine Company in the vicinity of that town. The vessels carrying the ore to these ports freight back with coals and Wigan slack. It is to be observed, that the ore of this mountain, in general, is but poor, and that the richest of it only goes to Glamorganshire and Lancashire. The poorer sort is manufactured into a *regulus* (for exportation to Liverpool and Holywell) in convenient works on the mountain by the following process:—It is first broken into small pieces by women and children, who, armed with iron-gloves, reduce it to the requisite size with hammers. Being piled into a kiln (similar to those in which lime is burned) of great length, and about six feet high, (containing from two to three hundred to as many thousand tons of ore) it is covered over tightly and carefully, and set on fire. During this ignition, which continues for three, four, five, or six months, (according to the quantity *roasted*) the sulphur combined with the ore sublimates to the top of the kiln, and is conveyed, by a flue connected with it, to a receptacle called the *sulphur chamber*; from whence it is afterwards taken, purified, melted, cast into rolls, and sent to London. Having undergone the process of *roasting*, the ore is then taken to the

slacking-pit, constructed of stone, about six yards long, five wide, and eighteen inches or two feet deep. Here it continues two or three days, exposed to the action of a stream that runs through the place. From hence it is carried to the *puddle*, a stagnant pool similar to that made use of in purifying lead ore, and afterwards thrown into a sieve, of one mesh to the square inch. Such as remains in the machine is *buckered* as the miners term it, or reduced to coarse powder, and carried again to the puddle. What passes *through* this sieve is thrown into another of five meshes to the inch. Much of it is by this time too small to be retained by this sieve, and consequently escapes through it. This is once more taken to the *puddle*, and being drawn twice through the water, it is in a proper state to be smelted.

The water of the slacking pits and puddles, becoming by these processes strongly impregnated with mineral particles, is converted to a very lucrative purpose. Reservoirs of various dimensions, according to the convenience of situation, are formed in the neighbourhood of the pits and puddles, into which the water thus saturated is conducted by proper channels. In these, *plates of cast-iron*, two or three feet long,

between one and two broad, and three quarters of an inch in thickness, are immersed vertically, and a wonderful chemical process, amounting apparently to a transmutation of metals, in a short time takes place.

This process, however, is more complete with respect to the water pumped up from the bottom of the mine, arising from springs in the mountain, and rain falling and collecting in the gulphs below. By these means a prodigious emolument accrues to the proprietors, a fund that seems to be inexhaustible, as it must continue as long as the springs shall flow, and the rain shall fall. This water dissolving all the native copper which it finds, becomes richly saturated with the mineral. In that state it is pumped up from the bottom of the mine into such pits as I have described above, wherein iron plates are properly placed, or refuse masses of the same metal indifferently cast. Here the acid of the copperas seizes upon, or enters into combination with the iron, and the copper which it held in solution drops to the bottom in the form or appearance of a rust-coloured sediment. A man or boy, with an instrument like a garden hoe, scrapes the copper from the plates or pieces of old iron every day, until the

whole of the iron be consumed. The precipitate is then raked out, and being dried in a kiln, becomes almost equal in value to native copper.

This singular process also produces another profit; the acid of the copperas, in its union with the iron, reducing the latter to a calx, from which is made a considerable quantity of yellow and red ochre, exported to the London and Liverpool markets.

We could not gratify our curiosity with a sight of an *allum work* and a *green vitriol* manufactory in the neighbourhood of the mountain, as no stranger is allowed to see the process pursued in making these substances.

After spending some hours on and in the mountain, we retraced our road to Plàs-Gwyn, where an elegant hospitality, much domestic comfort, social converse, and a most agreeable party, rendered it a matter of great regret to us that we could not prolong our stay beyond this morning.

Under the direction of Mr. Panton, we quitted Plàs-Gwyn after breakfast, and took a near road to Plàs-Newydd, the costly seat of the Earl of Uxbridge. Our course led us through the village of Pen-Mynydd, remark-

able for being the birth-place of *Owen Tudor*, the great ancestor of a line of English monarchs, who, (according to Gray's bard, in a prediction delivered some centuries after the completion of the event) restored the sceptre of England to the Welsh, the original possessors of it.

- “ But oh! what solemn scenes on Snowdon's height
 “ Descending slow their glittering skirts unroll?
 “ Visions of glory! spare my aching sight,
 “ Ye unborn ages croud not on my soul!
 “ No more our long-lost Arthur we bewail;
 “ All hail, ye genuine kings! Britannia's issue, hail!”

The residence of this ancient and respectable family has been long dilapidated. What remains is incorporated in a farm-house; but coats of arms, escutcheons, and specimens of old masonry, still exist to evince its former respectability.

We proceeded to the mansion of *Plâs-Newydd* through the park, an inclosure of no great extent, but extremely beautiful, gently sloping to the *Menai*, and covered with venerable oaks, and noble ash trees. In the midst of this fine sylvan scene, stand two august and most appropriate ornaments, relics of *Druidical* superstition, and monuments of the rude art of

the ancient British, by far the greatest and most perfect specimens of Druidical remains in the whole island. They are what antiquaries call *cromlechs*.

These huge piles stand contiguous to each other, (as is, I believe, generally the case with respect to the cromlech) but the eastern is considerably the larger of the two. This seems originally to have consisted of seven stones, six uprights supporting an immense superincumbent one, (with its flat face lying upon them) thirteen feet long, nearly as much broad, and four feet thick. When first constructed, it would probably have admitted a tall man to stand upright in it. The western cromlech is a child to its mighty neighbour, little more than five feet long by four and half broad; originally supported by four stones, one of which is fallen from its proper situation.

Whether or not these prodigious piles of stones were raised to the honour of the Deity, or to the memory of the departed hero, would lead us into a field of enquiry too wide for a letter to investigate. Both opinions have had their able advocates; but the weight of argument seems to preponderate on that side which ascribes the cromlech to the purposes

of religion, and makes them the altars of Druidical worship, which smoaked with the blood of human victims.

Plâs-Newydd is a magnificent castellated mansion, altered and enlarged by the present Earl of Uxbridge, at a prodigious expence. Commanding a view that ranges over the winding, picturesque strait, on the banks of which it stands, and having immediately before it the sublime line of the Snowdon mountains, its situation is at once beautiful and grand. In the buildings of the place, convenience has been as much studied as magnificence; the baths, communicating with the Menai, are sequestered and commodious, and the sheltered receptacle in which his lordship's little fleet rides secure from the storm, and from whence he takes boat, is particularly well contrived.

Here we bade adieu to our obliging conductor, and taking a path through Plâs-Newydd park, soon arrived at the ferry of the same name, which we crossed in five minutes, the wind blowing strongly in our favour, and reached Caernarvon early in the afternoon.

Many reasons had induced us to visit Anglesey; amongst which, the hope of meeting with some vestiges of Druidical superstition,

or some remains of original manners in this distant corner of ancient Britain, had been an important one. In this respect, however, we were disappointed; few, if any, local customs now exist in Anglesey, and the features of character which appear most remarkable to a stranger, attach also to the other counties of North-Wales.

The history of this place would naturally divide itself under four heads: antiquities and mineralogy, products and manners; a few hints on each of these subjects are all we had opportunity to collect.

The antiquities are chiefly Druidical, and consist of temples; *carnedds*, or burial places; and *cromlechs*, or altars. Of the first and second, we saw no specimens, as they are chiefly confined to the western division of the island. I have already described the *cromlech* at Lord Uxbridge's, which, with one on a farm called Trevor, about two miles from Mr. Panton's, are the finest in Anglesey.

From the *British* we descend to *Roman* antiquity; but of this we have still fewer vestiges. All, indeed, may be comprised in the tradition that tallies with historical relations, of Suetonius Paulinus having passed over his conquering

legions into Anglesey partly in boats and partly by fording the Menai at a place called Porthamel, or *the spot of frequent passing*.* A few Danish remains, on the eastern shore of the island, close the list of antiquities in this place.

A great part of Anglesey consists of limestone, amongst which are prodigious quantities of *quartz*; *mundic*, *pyrites*, *pudding-stone*, and a porous substance, like pumice-stone, (having every volcanic appearance) are also abundantly found there. A pleasing effect arises from the divisions of the fields being formed of these micacious substances; which, when the sun shines upon them, exhibit a most glittering and splendid appearance.

Of the agriculture, we have to regret that we cannot give a tolerable account. It is a languid, spiritless, unprofitable system; the consequences of which are too visible in scanty crops and a poverty-stricken peasantry. A dearth of fuel adds to the other inconveniences of the labouring poor, obliging them to rob

* Igitur Monam insulam incolis validam, et receptaculum perfagarum aggredi parat, navesque fabricatur plano alveo, adversus breve littus et incertum. Sic pedites equites vado secuti aut altiores inter undas, adnantes equis transmisere.—*Tàcit. Annal. lib. xiv. c. 29.*

the commons of their shallow staple, which they pare off without mercy; procuring, by these means, an incombustible kind of turf, badly answering the purposes of burning. Land, which if improved, or tolerably cultivated, would let for twenty shillings per acre, now goes for seven shillings, another proof of wretched husbandry. To this neglect of tillage, however, there are some exceptions, particularly the extensive property of Mr. Panton, which is in a state of rapid improvement. Black cattle are one of the staple products of Anglesey. They are large, handsome beasts, and being exported in great quantities, make a considerable return to the island. The Earl of Uxbridge, in his park at Plâs-Newydd, has a fine specimen of this breed in an enormous black bull, which could not be excelled by any of his brethren who roam through the rich pastures of Lincolnshire or Leicestershire. Gluts of herrings sometimes visit the coasts of Anglesey, are dried, exported, and considered by the *knowing ones* in delicacies as particularly excellent.

The manners of these islanders, as I before observed, are simple, and exactly similar to their brethren of Merioneth and Caernarvon-

shire. Like all other ignorant people, they are extremely superstitious; and of the power of witches, the appearance of ghosts, and the tricks of fairies, they “hold each strange tale devoutly true.” Much singularity is observable in their *funerals*, and some curious circumstances distinguish the North-Wallian *courtships* from the *mode of making love* in South-Britain.

When a person dies, the friends and relations of the deceased meet in the room where the corpse lies, the evening previous to the funeral. Here the male part of the company are seen smoaking, drinking, cracking their jokes, and sometimes indulging themselves with a *Welsh air*; whilst the women are kneeling round the corpse, weeping bitterly, and bewailing, in terms of “loud lament,” the loss they have experienced. When the body is committed to the ground, the sexton, after casting the earth upon it, holds out his spade to the attendant mourners, who, in turn, contribute as much money as they can conveniently afford. The sum thus collected is a compliment to the officiating minister, and intended by the donors as a bribe to extricate the soul of the deceased as quickly as possible out of *purgatory*. It is

evidently a remnant of the Roman Catholic faith, and nothing more than the *mass money* which formerly was bestowed in large proportions for the same purpose. On these occasions the oblations are oftentimes very considerable; and we are informed by a clergyman in Anglesey, that he had more than once received ten pounds in that way.

From this custom, and certain other perquisites, the curacies of North-Wales afford very comfortable incomes; the character of *poverty*, therefore, which attaches to the subaltern clergy of South-Wales, does not extend to those of the northern part of the principality. The stipends, it is true, are in both cases very trifling; but the *arian-rhew*, or offering at the graves just mentioned, (so called from the money being cast into the *spade*) and some other sources of profit, make the amount of many of the North-Wales curacies above one hundred pounds a year.

The process of *courtship* is to the full as extraordinary, as that observed at funerals. In America the inhabitants call it *bundling*, a practice which is supposed to have contributed greatly to the *rapid increase in population* made by the United States in the course of a few

years. The same consequence, it should seem, ought to arise from the Welsh method of making love, few marriages being celebrated amongst the ancient British peasantry, which are not rendered absolutely *necessary* by the *previous situation* of the female parties.

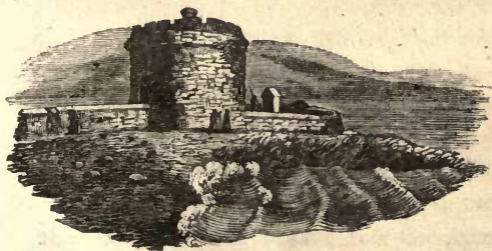
Much has been said of the beauty of *Welsh music*, and without doubt, the *melodies* of the country are ravishingly sweet, soft, and pathetic. But it is not amongst the common people that we are to look for them. The *tunes*, if such they may be called, which the mountaineers chaunt, have nothing to do with harmony; they are in general dull and monotonous. It is in these, however, that they recite their *Pennylls*, or stanzas of old historical ballads and traditional songs, consisting of many verses. This they do in parties, singing alternately; another taking up the song and giving the following stanza, when his neighbour has concluded the preceding one. The delicious airs, known by the name of *Welsh airs*, and to which Mr. Edward Jones* has given permanence and stability, by collecting and publishing them, were floating in a tra-

* “Musical and Poetical Relics of the Welsh Bards.”

ditional form amongst the harpers of Wales, seldom committed to notation, and liable consequently to be vitiated and forgotten. Most of these are of great antiquity, and they all possess that feeling and pathos, which evince they were composed by men skilled in the science of music, and on occasions that warmed the imagination and interested the heart.

Your's, &c.

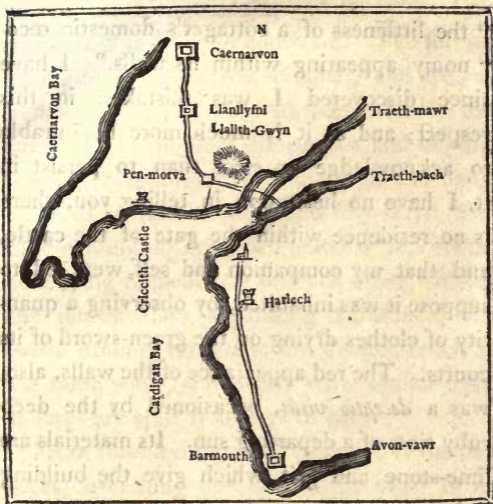
R. W.



the first part of the paper of 1784
 which form a copy of the paper of 1784
 which consisted to mention, and these con-
 siderable to be stated and together
 of the part of great antiquity, and they all
 possess the feeling and nature, which is
 that are composed of this kind in the
 nature of the part, and a few lines that remain
 the in addition and interest the heart.

I have the honor to be
 Dear Sir
 Yours truly
 W. M.





LETTER XIII.

TO THE SAME.

Barmouth, Sept. 3d.

IN consequence of taking a second survey of Caernarvon castle, I find reason to correct the account which I gave you last year, of this edifice.*

I then remarked, that much of the effect of the ruin was lost by "its being inhabited, and

* See Walk through Wales, part i. p. 137.

“ the littleness of a cottager’s domestic œconomy appearing within its walls.” I have since discovered I was mistaken in this respect; and as it is much more honourable to acknowledge an error than to persist in it, I have no hesitation in telling you, there is no residence within the gate of the castle, and that my companion and self were led to suppose it was inhabited, by observing a quantity of clothes drying on the green-sword of its courts. The red appearance of the walls, also, was a *deceptio visus*, occasioned by the deep ruby tints of a departing sun. Its materials are lime-stone and grit, which give the building rather a *grey* than a red cast.

We bade adieu to Caernarvon early yesterday morning, and took the road to Llanllyfni, which skirts the coast, and presents an uninterrupted view of the sea, the noble mountains called the Rivals forming the boundary to the southward, and the turrets of Caernarvon castle gradually fading away in the distance behind us. The bold and rude mountain *Kilgwin*, with its dark, steep, and rugged sides, shut up the scene to the left.

Having breakfasted heartily on tea and *wigs* at Llanllyfni, we set out to visit the large slate

quarries on this mountain, and the lakes *Lynnian Nantlle* in its neighbourhood. The former belong to the Rev. Mr. Hughes, and are extremely valuable. They are perpendicular excavations, of different dimensions and depths, some sinking below the surface of the earth upwards of one hundred and fifty feet. The slate is found in *strata* of greater or less thickness, lying immediately on each other without any intermediate separating substance; the *laminæ* running vertically, and divided much in the same way, (and nearly with similar ease) as laths are split from logs of oak.

From this elevation we descended to the two lakes, stretching one behind the other in an eastern direction. The scenery of these, particularly of the large one, is exquisitely beautiful. Here the eye ranges over a fine sheet of water a mile and a half in length, and above half as much in breadth, surrounded on all sides with mountains, whose dark slaty heads tower above it to a sublime height, in shapes most singular and fantastic, and in appearance most wild and rude. As they fall, however, towards the lake they drop this savage aspect, and before they unite with it, become verdant slopes, covered with vegetation, ornamented

with little cottages, and fringed with various trees.

Defying the rain, which now fell very copiously, we pursued our route to *Pen-morva*, a village eleven miles from Llanllyfni, and found ourselves in a most comfortable cottage-inn there at half past four.

The afternoon clearing up we had an opportunity of rambling round the village, and ascending a lofty rocky mountain to the eastward of it, called *Llallth-Gwyn*, or the white hill. From hence an extensive view opens itself, stretching over the picturesque village of *Pen-morva*, (situated at the bottom of a broad valley, on the estuary called the *Traeth-mawr*) the deep bay of *Caernarvon*, the neighbouring mountains, and the ocean.

A curious feature in the contiguous scenery particularly struck us. *Pen-morva* stands at the head of a range of meadows, stretching to the *Traeth-mawr*, about a mile in length. These are of one uniform flatness, but studded here and there with little conical rocky islands, starting out from the surrounding level to different heights. We considered them as certain indications of this track being a gift of the sea, which, at some period very remote,

had receded from it, and allowed vegetation to clothe the sandy parts of the flat, whilst the rocky excrescences continued in their original barren state, to tell the story of their former relationship with the ocean.

Anxious to reach Barmouth this evening, we quitted Pen-morva early in the morning, crossing the mouth of the Traeth-mawr and the Traeth-bach in a small leaky skiff, with a heavy gale of wind right against us. Across this pass, however, we were safely rowed by the man and his wife who keep the ferry; the former a true Celt in stature and appearance, the latter exhibiting the remains of a beautiful person, with the eye of lustre and teeth of ivory, almost peculiar to her country. Unfortunately we could exchange no communication with this harmonious couple, as they scarcely spoke a word of English. Indeed we have had occasion to remark, that much less English is spoken on the north-west coast of Wales than in any other parts. Scarcely a cottager, woman, or child, whom we have met for the last three days, has been able to give us an answer in our own language; and what is still more extraordinary, all the women

servants at our two last inns were equally unqualified for colloquial intercourse with us.

Another heavy shower sent us drenched into the town of Harlech, and obliged us to have recourse to a bottle of brandy, which we found here in great perfection. A civil, attentive creature, John Richards, (the guide to Cwm-Bychan, the lakes, &c. whom I cannot help recommending on account of his superior sagacity, as well as civility) offered his services to conduct us to the castle, and was accepted as our escort there.

This ruin exhibits another specimen of the military architecture of the thirteenth century. Edward I. erected it on the scite of a more ancient fabric, built by a Welsh prince some centuries previous to that æra. Though small, it must have been a very strong fortress, from the circumstances of its situation; being founded on a huge bed of lofty rock, the strata of it singularly disposed, and forming an angle of forty-five degrees with the plane of the horizon. A cascade tumbling from the top of the rock, on the north-eastern side, gives a very picturesque effect to this rude piece of scenery. The castle is quadrangular, strengthened at the corners by large round towers, from the top of

each of which issues an elegant smaller one. Two circular bastions and three portcullisses added to the defence of the entrance. Like all other edifices erected for hostile purposes, Harlech castle has experienced many tempestuous scenes; the last in which it was engaged occurred in 1647, when William Owen, with his garrison of twenty-eight men, surrendered to the Oliverian forces, after it had seen every other castle in Wales desert the royal cause.

Every external circumstance induced us to continue at Harlech; the wind blew an hurricane, the rain fell in torrents, and the evening was setting in; add to this too, Barmouth lay at the distance of ten miles from us. But unfortunately no beds were to be procured in the place, and we were reduced to the alternative of braving the storm, or sleeping on the floor.

Our councils are always short and decisive; we quickly resolved to disregard the weather and proceed to Barmouth. Fortifying ourselves, therefore, with a little more of the landlady's neat Coniac, we sallied forth to meet the rage of the elements.

The road followed for the most part the undulations of the shore, and continually exhibited to us the awful sight of an unbounded ocean,

maddened by tempest, and wrapped in foam. To the left the western limb of the mountains that stretch across Merionethshire, dropping in rocky precipices and deep hollows to the strand, formed an appropriate companion to the watery element, which, in the nervous language of scripture, "raged horribly" on the opposite quarter.

Amid this impressive scenery, where all was hugeness and uproar, it was impossible not to feel the religious principle powerfully within us. Each object tended to inspire us with wonder, adoration, and humility; with a full conviction of our own insignificance, and the omnipotence and immensity of that Being, "at whose word the stormy wind ariseth, "which lifteth up the waves of the ocean;" and who, with equal ease, "maketh the storm "to cease, so that the waves thereof are still." "Who weigheth the mountains in a balance, "and taketh up the sea in the hollow of "his hand."

This wild and singular road continued quite to Barmouth, a town equally extraordinary in appearance, creeping up the rugged side of an abrupt mountain, which frowns over the sea at the mouth of the river Mowddach. It is a

fashionable bathing-place, admirably calculated for a summer's excursion, the country around it being inexhaustible in wonders and beauties. Part of the town has literally its foundation on the sand, and is completely overlooked by the aërial residences of those wiser architects, who have built their houses on the rock, which lifts its rugged face to the eastward of them.

It would be ungrateful in us not to acknowledge the extreme kindness of the landlady at our present quarters, the *Cors-y-Gidol* arms, who though her house is inconveniently full, received us (wet, dirty, and miserable as we appeared to be) with alacrity, and afforded us every possible comfort. The waiter and chamber-maid also must not be forgotten. The former has accommodated two of us with the contents of his wardrobe; and the latter furnished the rest of our party with *petticoats*, to supply the absence of the waiter's *inexpressibles*, which the disproportion in size between him and our other two friends prevented them from using.

Your's, &c.

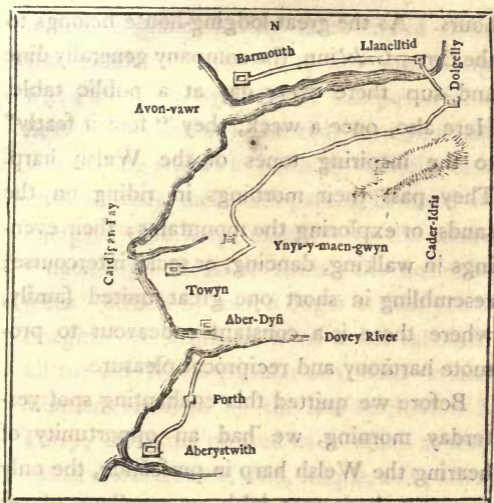
R. W.

fashionable bathing-place, admirably calculated for a summer's excursion, the country around it being inexhaustible in wonders and beauties. Part of the town has literally its foundation on the sand, and is completely overlooked by the aerial residences of those wise architects, who have built their houses on the rock, which lifts its rugged face to the eastward of them.

It would be regretful in us not to acknowledge the extreme kindness of the lady at our present quarters, the Corv-Gilda stam, who though her house is inconveniently full, received us (wet, dirty, and miserable as we appeared to be) with alacrity, and afforded us every possible comfort. The waiter and chambermaid also must not be forgotten. The former has accommodated two of us with the contents of his wardrobe; and the latter furnished the rest of our party with Amaranth, to supply the absence of the waiter's washbasins, which the disposition in six between them and our other two friends prevented them from using.

Yours, &c.

R. W.



LETTER XIV.

TO THE SAME.

Aberystwith, Sept. 5th.

THE little town of Barmouth held out so many charms (for it is at present full of North-Wallian and Shropshire beauties) that, had not our period of absence been limited, we should have remained some days there. Nothing, indeed, can exceed the social comfort in which the visitors at this place pass their

hours. As the great lodging-house belongs to the *Cors-y-Gidol* inn, the company generally dine and sup there every day at a public table. Here also, once a week, they “foot it featly” to the inspiring tones of the Welsh harp. They pass their mornings in riding on the sands, or exploring the mountains; their evenings in walking, dancing, or social intercourse; resembling in short one great united family, where there is a constant endeavour to promote harmony and reciprocal pleasure.

Before we quitted this enchanting spot yesterday morning, we had an opportunity of hearing the Welsh harp in perfection, the only time we have met with an excellent player since we began our expedition; for unfortunately the old bard at Conway, whom C——ll and I heard with such rapture last year, is too ill to play again.*

The name of the Barmouth harper is *Parry*, a young man who, having from the age of seven studied and practised the instrument, has attained to an uncommon excellence upon it.

You are aware, my dear sir, that the *telyn*, or Welsh harp, is very superior to the one com-

* Walk thro' Wales, p. 149. His name is *Smith*, not *Jones*.

mon in England, having three sets of strings, the middle set comprising flats and sharps.* Mr. Parry's management of this powerful and flexible instrument is, indeed, very surprising; whether he wishes to sooth by softness, charm with delicacy, melt with pathos, or rouse with energy, "the harp, obedient to the master's hand," produces irresistibly the desired effects. Struck by such a finger as this, you will imagine we heard with no small satisfaction all the old Welsh popular airs, with variations adapted to them by the late celebrated Mr. Parry; but none pleased us so much as the air called *Harlech Castle*, wild, simple, and pathetic, beyond the power of language to describe.

The waning noon obliged us reluctantly to leave this gratifying entertainment, and take the road to Dolgelly, a town ten miles distant from Barmouth.

We had heard much of the beauties of this walk, and consequently anticipated a great

* The ancient Welsh harp had only *one* row of strings, and these were formed of *twisted hair*. Towards the conclusion of the 15th century two other sets of strings were added, and *gut* was introduced in lieu of hair. Before this improvement the harper produced flats and sharps by a particular management of the finger and thumb, a much more difficult, as well as more imperfect, method than that now practised.

deal; but in this instance we found expectation had not out-stripped reality.

For the first mile and a half the road winds along the northern bank of the river Avon-vawr, or Mowddach, each side of which is bounded by lofty lime-stone mountains; the southern strongly marked with the rough features of the parent from which they spring—the mighty Cader-Idris.

Here the stream, for a short time, is lost to the traveller, the road creeping between the elevations to the left hand, and a lofty wooded hill that stands detached from them, and changing the prospect from the vast and sublime to a quiet woodland scene. This sort of view, with occasional peeps at the water, continues nearly three miles, when we suddenly turn upon *Pont-ddu*, a stone bridge of one arch, bestriding a furious torrent, that rushing from a dark wooded glen forms a most beautiful cascade a few yards above it.

Ere we proceeded a mile further, another variety in the scenery, of the most striking kind, occurred. The mountains before us, receding from the river, are replaced by rich meadows, through which the stream, widening and deepening, flows with silent majesty.

A vast declivity forms the distant scene, diversified with woods and lawns, and rural dwellings, with a partial view of the little town of Dolgelly. Behind us are caught the different reaches and windings of the river, losing itself at length in the great waste of waters, together with the shaded hills that confine it on one side, and the rocky precipices of Cader-Idris on the other.

We entered Dolgelly by the same road that C——ll and I traversed last year, on our way to Beddgellert, which conducted us through Llanelyd turnpike, where the fair daughter of *Henry Roberts* had then regaled us with a sumptuous breakfast.*

The hospitality of this little family, consisting at that time of the father, mother, and unmarried daughter, had impressed us with a gratitude which even a *winter at Bath* could not efface; we turned, therefore, into the well-known cottage, and enquired of a woman, who was sitting there, after the welfare of the soldier, his wife, and daughter. She informed us he had removed from this residence several

* Walk through Wales, part i. p. 105.

months since, and kept at present another turnpike in the neighbourhood of Dolgelly.

C——ll and I immediately determined to take the opportunity of greeting our old host and companion once more, and quitting our friends, pursued the road to his dwelling.

We found him, fortunately, at his door, but ah! how different did he now appear to the hale, active, and sprightly old man, who accompanied us last year to the falls of the Mowd-dach. His eye was languid, his face pale, and overspread with a cloud of melancholy. On seeing us, however, a momentary gleam of wonted cheerfulness returned, and grasping our hands, he expressed the warmest pleasure at this unexpected meeting. As was natural, we enquired for his wife and daughter. At the mention of the former a deep blush suffused his countenance, his voice faltered, and the tear stole silently down his cheek. "Alas!" said he, "gentlemen, I have lost her. She who had been my friend, and my companion, for *forty* years, was taken from me last March. I thought the loss would have broken my heart; but He who wounds will also bind up. It pleased God to restore me again to a tolerable share of health, and if not to comfort,

“ at least to resignation. Life ceases, indeed,
 “ to have any pleasures for me; and the only
 “ worldly wish I have is, that my daughter may
 “ find a protector before I am taken from her.
 “ Were this wish gratified, I should have no
 “ further tie to bind me to earth, but would
 “ gladly lie down in the same grave that now
 “ holds my faithful Hannah.”

We expressed what we felt—a real concern at his misfortune; which drew from the good old man a farewell benediction, delivered with such fervour and affection as interested our feelings as deeply as his own appeared to be moved.

Quitting the cottage of Roberts, we strolled slowly to the Golden-Lion inn, where our friends had secured very comfortable accommodations, and bespoken some of Mr. Williams’s excellent mountain mutton.

At six o’clock this morning we were on our march, following the road to Towyn, which skirts the northern roots of Cader-Idris. The wild precipices of this gigantic mountain on the one hand, and the craggy tops of inferior elevations on the other, were the only features of our view for some miles, when the road became still more uninteresting, pursuing the

undulations of boggy mountains, without a trace of inhabitant or cultivation.

Situated close upon the shore, *Towyn** has nothing to recommend it but a bold unbounded view of the ocean, with a fine level hard sand, well calculated for sea-bathing.

We did not continue long in the town, as it happens to be a race-week there, and the motley crew assembled to partake of these annual sports seemed to eye us with no very friendly glances. We could not but observe with regret, the consequences of this unnatural introduction of an amusement (the twin-brother of profligacy and licentiousness) into a place which nature seemed to have consecrated to quiet and retirement, to simplicity and peace. Instead of that appearance of industry and decency which characterise a sequestered country village, all was idleness and noise. Every proper avocation seemed to be forgotten. Collected together in little groups, the inhabitants were squabbling over the result of the last afternoon's race, or making bets for the match of the approaching evening; whilst others, less deep in the business of the turf, but

* *Towyn*, i. e. *the strand*; its population about five hundred.

bitten by the genius of idleness that hovered over the village, were drowning their faculties in copious potations of *cwrrrw*; or, like the Centaurs and Lapithæ of old, were bruising over the inflaming goblets they had drained.

We quitted this scene, in which rustic simplicity and fashionable profligacy were united by an heterogenous combination, with the conviction, that there is no better, more speedy, or efficacious mode of corrupting the rural character of a country village, and converting simplicity and industry into dishonesty and idleness, than the institution of an *annual race-week*.

Our route led us close to the sea-side, over an hard sand for four miles, when we passed the ferry at Aber-Dyfi, a small sea-port, employing about thirty ships, and containing five hundred inhabitants.

Still we continued to tread the shore, gratified with the sight of a troubled ocean, which broke with dreadful fury over the dark cliffs that form the southern shore of Caernarvon bay.

We reached at length the village of Porth, when the stupendous view we had so long contemplated, deserted us, the road winding up an ascent with an elevation on each side.

Little beauty of country now occurred, the scenery being totally bare of wood, and scanty in population. We were glad, therefore, to terminate a walk that became fatiguing for want of interest, and entered our old quarters at Aberystwith as the clock told eight.

Your's, &c.

R. W.





LETTER XV.

TO THE SAME.

Cardigan, Sept. 7th.

WERE I a judicial astrologer, I should entertain no doubt of our having commenced the expedition we are engaged in, under the influence of some very benign and most propitious planet, since ordinary causes are scarcely sufficient to account for the many instances of good fortune we have experienced

during it. The events of to-day lead me to this observation.

After having refitted our wardrobe at Aberystwith, (for it was absolutely necessary to call in the assistance of the taylor) we took the road yesterday noon that leads to Cardigan, intending to divide the distance (thirty-eight miles) into two days' journies.

For the last seventy or eighty miles along the western coast of Wales, we have had occasion to remark that the population is more scanty, and the appearance of poverty more general, than in any other part of the principality. The latter phœnomenon is easily accounted for. All the villages are nothing more than colonies of fishermen, who live on the irregular profits of their precarious profession.

Those whose gains are uncertain, are seldom characterised by habits of œconomy. The pinching want of the last day impels to unrestrained indulgence on the next, if success in their employment have given the power of gratifying it; and the hope of equal good fortune on the morrow precludes the necessity of laying up any part for the wants of the future.

These villagers speak but little English, and unlike their countrymen, are not only dull and

heavy, but exhibit none of that civility of manners and kindness of heart which render the Welsh character in general so estimable.

An excellent little inn, at the village of Aberaron afforded us admirable accommodation last night. We left it early this morning in search of Kilgarran castle, to which (thanks to sober recollection) we were now in the right direction. An occasional allusion to our former wild-goose chase was fair enough; nor could the *antiquary*, after having led his companions so egregiously astray before, feel indignant at the *many significant enquiries* which they now made after the object of their march.

A dull, unvaried country, consisting chiefly of recent inclosures, but completely barren of wood, presented itself for fourteen or fifteen miles, when we found ourselves at the village of Blaneporth. Following the directions of our last host, we here quitted the Cardigan road, and turned on the left towards Kilgarran, through a broad valley extremely beautiful, watered by the river Tyvi.

The little village of Lluryd was now before us, very picturesque in situation, enlivened by the immense works and numerous workmen of Sir Benjamin Hammet, busied in

the manufacture of tin-plates. These works find employment for two hundred men.

We had already seen a similar manufactory in Cwn-Neath, but as we understood the one before us was considerably more extensive than the other, and singularly complete, curiosity naturally prompted us to inspect it. Fortunately, Mr. Hammet (the second son of Sir Benjamin) happened to be at the works at the time, and (though we were strangers to him) not only accompanied us through them, and explained the various processes they exhibit, but very politely introduced us to his father; who, with an hospitality we can never forget, invited us to partake of an excellent dinner, to which his family were just going to sit down. We attended Sir Benjamin to his house, *Castle-Malkwn*, a commodious mansion, in the immediate neighbourhood of the works, where we found munificence, liberality, and good-humour; the charms of beauty, and the attractions of female accomplishment.

Much has been done by Sir Benjamin, and done with judgment, in forming the pleasure-grounds round *Castle-Malkwn*, but owing to the more important calls on his attention which the manufactory produced, they are not as yet

in a perfect state. A very beautiful feature of them is the little romantic walk, called the *glen*, formed at the foot of a steep rock, shaded by over-hanging wood, and pursuing the windings of a murmuring brook, shut in on the opposite side by a lofty bank, covered with trees. This is already nearly complete; but when entirely so, will receive additional interest from a projected cascade, which is intended to make a fall of sixty feet.

Having once more passed through the works with Mr. Hammet, and seen the various stupendous operations carried on there, (the effect of which was prodigiously increased by the darkness of the night) we took the road to Cardigan. Our kind companion, however, would not quit us till we had nearly reached the town, and promised to call at Castle-Malkwyn on the following day.

Your's, &c.

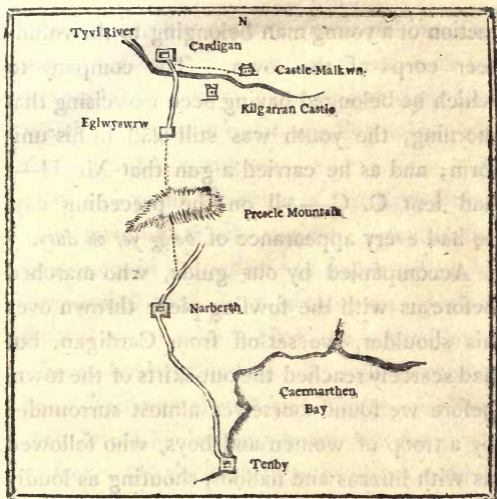
R. W.

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 a fall of sixty feet.

I having once more passed through the works
 with Mr. Hammer, and seen the various sta-
 pedons operations, carved on there, (the ef-
 fect of which was judiciously increased by
 the darkness of the night) we took the road to
 Cardigan's (our kind companion), however,
 would not put us till we had nearly reached
 the town, and arrived at last at Castle-Milk-
 2 was on the following day.

Yours &c.

R. W.



LETTER XVI.

TO THE SAME.

Tenby, Sept. 12th.

WE employed the morning of the 9th in surveying the banks of the river Tyvi from Cardigan to Castle-Malkwn, a walk of unrivalled beauty and variety.

Unable to unravel the intricacies of the way ourselves, we had recourse to the mistress of our inn for a guide, who put us under the di-

rection of a young man belonging to the volunteer corps of the town. The company to which he belonged having been exercising that morning, the youth was still clad in his uniform; and as he carried a gun that Mr. H—t had lent C. C——ll on the preceding day, he had every appearance of *being yet on duty*.

Accompanied by our guide, who marched before us with the fowling-piece thrown over his shoulder, we set off from Cardigan, but had scarcely reached the out-skirts of the town, before we found ourselves almost surrounded by a troop of women and boys, who followed us with huzzas and halloos, shouting as loudly as they could roar, “French prisoners! French prisoners!” an idea naturally enough suggested to them by the order of our march, our thread-bare appearance, and the news that had arrived on the preceding day of the French troops in Ireland having surrendered to Lord Cornwallis.

We thought that fancy had already exhausted herself in forming imaginary *characters* for us, and never apprehended we should have to add to the respectable list, (which comprised footpads, gaol-birds, militia-men, and acquitted felons) the reputation of being *Sans Culottes*.

Following our military guide, we proceeded along the carriage-road for a mile and half, keeping the river in view on our right hand, which preserves a quiet winding course thro' flat and fertile meadows.

At this point the town of Cardigan forms a most pleasing object, standing upon a gentle eminence, in the centre of a broad valley, and surrounded with hills which rise gradually from it on all sides. Here, also, the Tyvi assumes a bolder character. Its right or southern bank becomes abrupt and craggy, the slate-rock lifting his beetling brow over the river at its foot. On the north, another bank suddenly shoots up to a great height, presenting a steep declivity completely covered with fine young timber from the summit to the bottom. This scenery accompanies the first reach of the river, a distance of three or four hundred yards.

The Tyvi now makes a fine sweep to the north, and forms a meandering current not unlike a Roman S, its lofty banks falling back and preserving a rectilinear parallel direction, while the intervals between their bottoms and the stream are filled up with luxuriant meadows. This I would call the second reach.

Hitherto we had pursued our route on the summit of the northern bank, and had only a bird's-eye prospect of the scenery; we now, however, descended by a steep path through the wood to the side of the river, and followed a foot-way that led us quite to the works of Sir Benjamin Hammet. From the spot where we first joined this road the view *down* the river is exquisitely fine; the eye catching at one glance all the undulations of its lofty banks, sometimes retiring into deep semicircular sweeps, at others pushing forwards into bold points, or elegant convexities.

The third reach of the river shortly after occurred, equally interesting with, though somewhat different from, the others. As heretofore, the banks continue wooded and steep, exhibiting those foldings and involutions which I have just described; but in addition to this general effect, a very particular beauty arises from the following little circumstance:—A stately tower, part of the ruined castle of Kilgarran, finely broken, and mantled with ivy, is seen bursting through the dark mass of shade that crowns the summit of the hill, which forms the back ground in this august picture. Never was a finer subject for the pencil of

taste. The scene, though confined, displays so much variety, and such an happy combination of beauties, both natural and artificial, as the artist would in vain seek for in any other spot.

The road now descended quite to the margin of the stream, and invited us, nothing loth, (for it was extremely hot) to pick our way through the wood's pleasing shade. This we did without difficulty, as the river occasionally seen through the trees, pointed out the direction we were to pursue. Another quarter of an hour brought us opposite to the august ruins of Kilgarran castle: a fortress proudly seated on the top of a craggy eminence, inaccessible on ever side but the south; precipitous, rude, and rocky, harmonizing finely with the dilapidated remains which load its summit.

Here again another transition takes place in the scenery, made more pleasing by the magic of contrast. A soft and quiet picture occurs; the banks lose their harsh features, we enter a little meadow embosomed in wood, and ornamented with a neat cottage, naturally exciting the ideas of rural simplicity and peaceful retirement.

We did not, however, long indulge these pleasing fancies. To this still, fairy region, a very different scene succeeded—the immense works of Sir Benjamin Hammet, where all is bustle, noise, and business.

The weight of our obligations to Sir Benjamin Hammet's family was increased by fresh civilities, which we received at *Castle-Malkwn* after our walk. Having spent a very pleasant hour there we left it reluctantly, accompanied by Mr. Hammet, (who kindly offered to be our *ciceroni* to Kilgarran castle) and took the opposite side of the river to that we had before traversed, catching by these means all the grand and lovely scenery of the northern bank.

We soon reached Kilgarran castle, and ascended to the top of its highest ruined tower, which commands a full and delightful view of the Tyvi, its windings, rocks, woods, and magnificent banks. With respect to the ruin, however, we had anticipated too much. Fancy, consistently with her usual delusions, had presented a picture to our imaginations, the colours of which greatly surpassed the sober tints of reality. Here was nothing that excited the idea of ancient royal revelry, the splendour of

“stately feasting,” the “thousand tapers,” and the croud of “gifted bards,” mentioned by the poet;* the fortress, though strong, is very small, and seems rather to have been built for hostile purposes, than intended for the proud and magnificent theatre of baronial hospitality. The most ancient part of the castle owes its origin to Roger Montgomery, a companion of William the Conqueror, to whom great demesnes in these parts were granted; but much of it is evidently of later date, and was probably built by the Earl of Pembroke in the beginning of the thirteenth century. Here we parted with Mr. Hammet, deeply sensible of our obligations to him, and passed through the village of Kilgarran, which offers nothing remarkable, save the little mansion of the curate, a cottage so completely hooded with ivy as to exhibit the appearance of a dwarfish countenance peeping from under a gigantic wig.

Our object was Eglwysrwrw, a small village in Pembrokeshire, about six miles from Kilgarran, where we had already bespoken accommodations for the night. The road to this place carried us through a rich country, which,

* See Warton's fine ode intitled, 'The Grave of King Arthur.'

unlike any thing we had hitherto seen in Wales, (excepting in the vale of Clwyd) exhibited a general system of good husbandry. We observed with much satisfaction the admirable effects of this system in the appearance of the lands, and the heaviness of the crops; but were still more gratified by the comfort and decency visible amongst the little farmers and labouring poor.

Perhaps throughout the whole British empire, there is no spot where the peasantry exhibit more happiness than in the northern parts of Pembrookeshire. Their families, on an average, consist of five people, provided for in the following manner:—

The father is generally employed through the whole year by the same farmer, who allows him during the eight summer-months four-pence per day, and for the remaining four months three-pence per day. He eats however his meals, breakfast, dinner, and supper, at the farmer's, and is usually allowed beside a jug of skimmed milk. The mother employs all the time not dedicated to domestic labours in knitting, or more commonly in making pieces of flannel, to be disposed of at some of the neighbouring fairs, of which there

are several annual ones in every Welsh town; out of the profits of this, the rent of the cottage is usually paid. No increase of wages to the labourer takes place in general, *at harvest*, as he expects to be recompensed in another way. But this is optional on his part; and if he choose money, the farmer gives him eightpence per day during that season. If not, he is paid by what the people in this country call *an huggling*, a practice of the following singular nature:—At Christmas, the farmer pays off any little debt which his labourer may have contracted at the miller's, and presents him with three large coarse loaves, and two large wheaten loaves, (each about two gallons) together with a quarter of good mutton. Thus assisted, the Pembrokeshire peasant partakes, in some little degree, of those gifts of a bountiful Providence, which the higher classes of society in other countries monopolize entirely to themselves. He sees himself brought to something like a rational level with his fellow-creatures, perceives that he has a stake in society, and feels that the practice of certain duties results from this situation; all which convictions operate upon him as powerful motives to decency and integrity, to cheerfulness and content.

The cottages of this part of Pembrokeshire generally lett at fifteen or eighteen shillings per annum each, having a small plot of ground attached to them, which enables the tenant commonly to keep a pig, and very often a cow.

Think not, my dear sir, that I have painted a picture of imaginary comfort in the above description. Actual observation proved to us the comparative happiness of the Pembrokeshire peasantry; and our opinions on the subject were further strengthened by the information of Mr. Watkins, who keeps the inn at Eglwysrw, himself a great farmer, as well as a most respectable, intelligent, and benevolent man.

Of this sequestered village, situated in a broad and fertile valley, and shut out from the surrounding world by a girdle of mountains, nearly encircling it, we took an unwilling leave on the 13th, and pushed on to Narberth. The day was miserably wet, and the country through which we passed in unison with it—rude, rocky, and barren.

Our first effort brought us to the summit of Presele mountain, a long, but not steep ascent, the face of which exhibits the most singular and curious appearances; masses of rock starting out of the ground, in fantastic shapes and

uncommon groupings, easily mistaken, at a little distance, for the immense remains of architectural prodigies. Here we found a fine cromlech, consisting of three upright stones, and a super-incumbent one of enormous magnitude.* This, however, was but a small remnant of Druidical worship, compared with the temple which occurred in a field on our right hand, at the point where we entered the Narberth turnpike-road. It consists of several upright stones, surrounding a circular area, (somewhat depressed) twenty-four yards in diameter. In the centre of this, and within the memory of man, stood an altar, formed of three stones, which a neighbouring farmer carried away in order to hang his gates upon them. No doubt can arise of its having been a Druidical temple, or, in the language of the poet,

“ A mighty pile of magic-planted rock,

“ Where but at times of holiest festival

“ The Druid led his train.”

About four hundred yards to the left of the road, and nearly in a right line with the temple, stands another immense oblong stone, placed

* The name of this cromlech is *Llach-y-Flaiddast*, *the great stone of the female wolf*; one amongst numberless other proofs of these noxious animals having anciently infested Wales.

upright in the ground, called *Maen-y-Guir*, and connected, probably, with the last-mentioned remain of antiquity.

We were now in the country of the *Flemings*, and as we approached *Narberth*, the manners, dress, and language of the inhabitants, entirely distinct from those of the neighbouring *Welsh*, evinced their different origin.

History, you are aware, tells us, that in the reign of *Henry I.* a dreadful inundation happening in the *Low Countries*, crowds of the ruined families came to *England*, and by their powerful connection at that court obtained of the king a grant of the greatest part of *Pembrokeshire*.*

Henry seems, indeed, to have been fully as much influenced by policy in this donation as by generosity; for the incursions of the neighbouring *Welsh* into his own territories were so frequent and destructive, that it became absolutely necessary to provide some check to their devastations. The presence of the *Flemings*, he conceived, a bold and resolute people, would produce this effect; nor, indeed, was he deceived; for, from the moment of their settling

* *Malmsbury*, fol. 89, n. 20, et infra. *Flor. Wig.* fol. 656.

in Pembrokeshire for some centuries, their dissimilarity from the Welsh produced such perpetual broils between the two people, as kept the attention of the latter continually engaged.

Traces of this antipathy may still be discovered. The descendants of the Flemings and their neighbours are as yet, and likely long to continue, distinct people; since little cordiality subsists between them, intermarriages seldom take place amongst them, and each detests the language of the other.

The Flemish figure and countenance are sufficiently obvious in the neighbourhood of Narberth, as well as the dress and names of the Low Countries. A jacket of brown cloth, with long skirts, and made to set close to the body over a blue or striped petticoat, and a shallow beaver hat, distinguish the women of this part from their neighbours; whilst a broad English dialect, somewhat like the Somersetshire, sprinkled with German words, led us to suppose we were suddenly transported to the southern side of the Severn.

The transition from the Welsh to the Flemish is indeed immediate, and nothing can be more singular than the unexpected change in manners, dress, person, and language, occa-

sioned by it. An instance of this occurred in our walk from Eglwysrw to Narberth. About four miles from the last-mentioned town, we addressed a peasant for directions as to the road, and finding he did not understand English, repeated our question in Welsh, to which we received an immediate answer. We proceeded three miles further, and made the same enquiry in Welsh of two or three inhabitants of the small village through which we were passing, when, to our astonishment, we understood they spoke no other language than English.

Our reception at Narberth was not such as induced us to remain longer than was sufficient to recruit ourselves, after a dirty walk and a complete drenching. We gladly, therefore, turned our backs upon it early yesterday morning, and proceeded towards Tenby, through a country pleasant, but not striking; peopled by the descendants of the Flemish settlers.

After an agreeable walk of four hours, the dilapidated turrets of Tenby rose before us—a town singularly odd in situation and appearance. Built literally upon a rock, it overlooks the western extremity of Caermarthen bay, commanding a noble view of this sweeping

shore and its eastern termination, the range of dark rocks called the *Worms*. At a small distance to the right, the little island of Caldy, rising out of the ocean and stretching two miles in length, defends Tenby from the rage of the south-western blast. A convenient harbour is formed by two piers, which shoot into a corner of the bay under the shelter of the rocks, and nearly encircle a small but safe spot for the anchorage of vessels.

This town, extremely strong from its natural situation, was further defended by stupendous fortifications, of which considerable remains are still to be seen. These, flanked with towers and bastions, surrounded it on every side, except where nature had made the exertions of art useless by perpendicular cliffs, and inaccessible rocks. They seem to have been erected about the 13th century, and when complete would render Tenby impregnable to any efforts that the military tactics of that age could make against it. We are forbidden, indeed, to allow a higher antiquity to the ruins of Tenby by historical records, which inform us that the town had been taken from the Flemings, burned, and *razed to the ground* by the Welsh, in the year 1188.

Directing our steps to the White-Lion, an admirable inn, seated on the rocky cliff that overlooks the bay, and commanding a magnificent and diversified prospect, we deposited our packs, ordered dinner, and rambled to the rocks and cliffs of the shore, where we spent two or three hours. Nothing can exceed the grandeur and beauty of these precipices. They consist of a dark-coloured lime-stone, profusely covered with shrubs of various kinds, thorns, furze, and fern; and worn into the most singular excavations by the action of the water, which, when the tide is up, lashes their sides with ceaseless fury. A whimsical arrangement of strata in these rocks adds much to their curiosity. In some places they are *oblique*, forming different angles with the plane of the horizon; in others *horizontal*; and in the island Caldy completely *vertical*, for two miles together. This disposition of the strata produces one very fine effect in a small rock called St. Catharine's, contiguous to the town, which may be approached at low water. Here the strata are nearly perpendicular, and thro' them the waves, by constant efforts, have formed an immense perforation, similar to a Gothic arch, 30 or 40 feet in height, beautifully

embossed with masses of muscles, periwinkles, and other marine animals, and fretted by the water into numberless excavations. This honeycomb character of the rock, indeed, continues through the whole extent of Caermarthen bay, but increases to great sublimity at Laugharne, about fourteen miles to the eastward of Tenby, where many curious caverns occur amongst the rocks, of magestic height and unknown extent.*

The retiring tide exposed a fine hard beach, where are bathing-machines for the accommodation of the company who visit this delightful spot in the summer months.

On our return to the White-Lion, we looked into the church—a large, handsome, and ancient edifice; the western door of which exhibits a curious mixture of the Gothic and Saracenic styles. It is one of the largest in the principality, consisting of three broad aisles nearly of the same dimensions, except that the middle one is rather higher than the lateral aisles, and prolonged beyond them. A carved

* The large oysters, called Tenby oysters, are taken in the bay of Caermarthen, three or four miles from the shore. *Stone coal* is found also in great quantities in the neighbourhood of the town.

ceiling, formed of wood, ornamented at the intersection of the ribs with various armorial bearings, and supported by human figures, springing from pillars of wood, is a remarkable singularity in this edifice. There are several fine old monuments, particularly two of gypsum, their sides highly ornamented with good basso-relievos. We were requested to observe another, at the western end of the south aisle, erected to the memory of John Moore, esq; in 1639, who, at the age of fifty-eight, with sixteen children, fell desperately in love, and perceiving that his passion was unreturned, pined himself into a consumption at Tenby. The monument bears this inscription, allusive to his hapless fate:—

‘ He that from home for love was hither brought,
 ‘ Is now brought home ; this God for him hath wrought.’

Two other epitaphs pleased us much; one to the memory of Jane Griffith, wife of Thomas Griffith, of Tenby, mariner.

‘ When faithful friends descend into the dust,
 ‘ Grief’s but a debt, and sorrows are but just.
 ‘ Such cause had he to weep, who freely pays
 ‘ This last sad tribute of his love and praise;
 ‘ Who mourns the best of wives and friends combin’d,
 ‘ Where with affection, diligence was join’d—
 ‘ Mourns, but not murmurs; sighs, but not despairs;
 ‘ Feels as a Man, but as a Christian bears.’

Another to the memory of Elizabeth Prosser,

‘ Rest, gentle lamb! to wait th’ Almighty’s will,
 ‘ Then rise unchang’d, and be an angel still.’

I know not whether they be original or not; but the concluding sentiment of the first, and the neat point of the second, rendered them, we thought, worth copying.

The charms of this place have already detained us here two days longer than we intended to remain, nor should we quit our excellent quarters at the White-Lion, if hard necessity did not compel us to be in Bath by the 16th instant.

Your’s, &c.

R. W.



Another to the memory of Elizabeth Prosser,

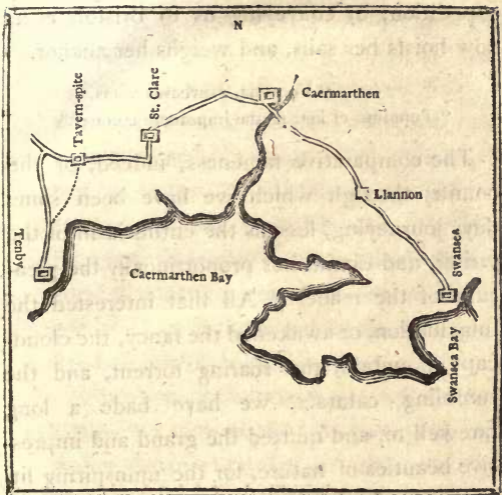
Best remember'd to wait th' Almighty's will,
 When the exchange, and he an angel will.

I know not whether they be original or not;
 but the concluding sentiment of the first, and
 the next point of the second, rendered them
 we thought worth copying.

The charms of this place have already de-
 tained us here two days longer than we in-
 tended to remain, nor should we part out ex-
 cellent quarters at the White Lion, if had
 necessity did not compel us to be in Ball by
 the 10th instant.

R. W.





LETTER XVII.

TO THE SAME.

Swansea, Sept. 15th.

YOU are at length released, my dear sir, from a correspondent who, notwithstanding his endeavours to the contrary, has, I fear, been too often dull, tedious, and uninteresting. If such have been the case, congratulate yourself that the vessel which is to conclude our

expedition, by conveying us to Bristol, even now hoists her sails, and weighs her anchor.

— “Vocat jam carbasus auras,
“Puppibus et læti pautæ imposuere coronas.”

The comparative tameness, indeed, of the country through which we have been some days journeying, lessens the enthusiasm of the writer, and diminishes proportionally the pleasure of the reader. All that interested the imagination, or awakened the fancy, the cloud-capt mountain, the roaring torrent, and the tumbling cataract, we have bade a long farewell to, and quitted the grand and impressive beauties of nature, for the uninspiring littlenesses of art.

We took the advantage of a glorious morning on the 13th, and walked on to Tavern-spice and St. Clare, about fifteen miles, chiefly by a foot-path, which skirted the coast, and presented a fine view of Caermarthen bay, gradually tranquillizing itself from the effects of a violent gale of wind. At this point the country begins to assume a pleasing character, diversified by broad valleys and swelling hills; increasing in richness and beauty, till we reached Caermarthen, a town embracing every advantage of situation.

On entering this place, the sign of the *Boar's-Head* attracted our attention; and by that kind of fascination which is frequently found to be attached to *names*, led us mechanically into the door over which it hung. The garrulous courtesy of a female attendant immediately impressed the ideas of East-cheap and Dame Quickly, while the portly presence of J——n, and the queer figures of the rest of the party, reminded us of the march of the facetious Jack Falstaff and his ragged recruits.

The town of Caermarthen boasts a very high antiquity, connected with classical history, as well as British superstition. Here the Romans had a station, called *Maridunum*; and here the great prophet, or *necromancer* of Cambria, yclept Merlin, first drew his breath. A circumstance of sufficient importance to impose a name on the place, which was afterwards called Caer-Merddin, or the city of Merlin. One of his predictions is yet floating in a traditional form amongst the inhabitants here, denouncing destruction on his favourite city, but connecting the event with such circumstances as cannot take place till the reign of *magic* be again restored; it is, that Caermarthen shall be destroyed by an earthquake, and the place it

stands on be converted into a vast lake, *when* a bull shall walk to the top of the church.

Caermarthen, being a favourite residence of the princes of South-Wales, was originally very strong, surrounded with walls, and fortified with a castle, part of which remains, and is used as a gaol. The present state of the town is most respectable, both in appearance and trade. A number of extremely well-built houses, and genteel independent families, put it upon a level with some of our best English towns; and the opulence of a numerous body of merchants proves the commercial advantages it enjoys. Situated upon the river Towy, which is navigable to Caermarthen for ships of two hundred and fifty tons burthen, and not more than ten miles from the sea, it commands a trade of considerable importance. Its exportations are chiefly as follow:—Prodigious quantities of oats and butter to Bristol, London, &c.; of stone-coal to Norfolk, Dorsetshire, &c.; of bark to Ireland; and of oak-timber to the different dock-yards of the kingdom. Its imports—fruits, &c. from Lisbon; bale-goods and hardware from British ports; and timber, &c. from Russia and Norway. Iron-works, tin-works, and a lead-mine in the neighbour-

hood of Caermarthen, contribute further to its wealth, and swell its importance. With these advantages, however, it has unfortunately no internal manufactures to employ the poor of the place; and what is still worse, no institutions to improve their morals, and give them a knowledge of their civil and religious duties. The fatal consequences of a neglect so unwarrantable you must anticipate; idleness and profligacy in this unfortunate class of society, and enormous expences on those who contribute to their support. This year, I am informed, the poor-rates will amount to eighteen shillings in the pound. Would the respectable inhabitants of the town *co-operate* in their endeavours to correct these evils, they would not only quickly remove that odium which justly attaches to the plan at present, from the wretched state of the poor there, but lessen immediately the burthen of their poor-rates, now rapidly increasing to intolerable magnitude. Caermarthen* contains between seven and eight thousand inhabitants,

* Is a corporate town, governed by a mayor, aldermen, recorder, town-clerk, &c. its charter nearly similar to that of the city of London, the corporation officers being elected annually at Michaelmas.

The church is a good substantial building, lately ornamented with a fine-toned organ. Amongst many old monuments, the most remarkable one is that erected to the memory of Sir Rhys ap Thomas, (ancestor to the present Lord Dynevor) who favoured Henry VII. in his landing at Milford, joined his forces, and fought for him at Bosworth field; his immense estates were afterwards confiscated by Henry VIII. A plain stone covers the remains of Sir Richard Steele, whose person and character are yet in the recollection of many old people in the town and neighbourhood. He died in his own house, since converted into an inn, called the Ivy-Bush, and is represented as having degenerated into idiocy previous to his decease; another affecting example of the evanescence of human intellect, of the vanity of all mortal acquirements!

“The tears of dotage from great Marlborough flow,
 “And Swift expires a driv’ller and a show.”

Plays were his chief amusements to the last, and the productions of his own pen his favourite performances. In the waywardness of mental imbecility, however, he would frequently scold the players for imaginary faults, and af-

fect to instruct them both in action and recitation. It is a reflection on the taste of Caermarthen, that no monument is erected to the memory of the author of the *Conscious Lovers*.

In proportion as we approach home, our solicitude to reach it increases. Not sufficiently *refined* to disclaim, or sufficiently *philosophized* to overcome, the best feelings of our hearts, the “*Limen amabile, matris et oscula,*” have yet charms for us, the long absence of which even novelty cannot recompense, nor variety supply.* This must be our excuse for hurrying from Caermarthen on the 14th, before we had leisurely examined the town and its neighbourhood.

Our walk to Swansea was divided into two stages, by breakfasting at Llannon, a small village thirteen miles from Caermarthen. The character of the country through the whole dis-

* L'Onda dal mar divisa
 Bagna la valla e il monte,
 Va passeggera in fiume
 Va prigioniera in fonte;
 Mormora sempre e geme
 Fin che non torna al mar.
 Al mar drove ella nacque
 Dove acquisto' gli umori
 Dove da lunghi errori
 Spera di reposar.

METASTASIO.

tance is pleasing, though not grand; varied by swelling hills and extensive vallies. Within two miles of Swansea, however, the scenery increases in magnificence, the vale of Towy (called Cwm-Tawe) unfolding itself, and displaying a rich assemblage of mountains and rivers, woods and villages. Much animation is given to this beautiful valley, by the very considerable manufactories of copper, brass, tin-plate, speltry, and iron, erected and worked on the banks of the river, and by the navigation of a canal, nearly completed, running seventeen miles up Cwm-Tawe. The uniform ranges of houses where the workmen reside, neatly white-washed, built on the declivity of the eastern mountains, and a very singular square castellated mansion erected for the same purposes on the opposite elevations, and accommodating twenty-four families, add to the variety and singularity of the prospect.

Swansea being a fashionable bathing-place, we judged it necessary to make as smart an appearance there as the situation of our wardrobes, and the state of our finances, would allow; having therefore *brushed up* at a small village, about a mile from the town, and hired a lad to carry our knapsacks, we boldly pro-

ceeded to the Mackworth-Arms, the best inn in the place. Pride, however, generally punishes itself; and fortune, who had always hitherto rewarded our ebullitions of vanity with shame and confusion of face, determined not to lose this last opportunity of exerting her malignity. While we were hastening to the inn, affecting that stare of conscious importance which a seat in a phaeton and four will hardly authorize, a cry from behind attracted our attention. Looking round, we beheld our poor page prostrate in the gutter, the packs rolling away from him in different directions, and mine, which was stuffed beyond its capability of extension, burst from top to bottom, discharging its heterogeneous contents over the pavement, and converting the street into a second rag-fair. I verily believe the smiles of some smart girls, who were taking their afternoon promenade, and the unrestrained mirth of half a dozen sailors, would have put our party to flight, had not J——n, whose *practical philosophy* is equal to his invincible good-humour, persuaded us to collect together the different articles, by observing, that it was much better to suffer the transient ordeal of a little ridicule, and endure the *evapora-*

tion of a little self-importance, than run the risque of losing the contents of the knapsack. Common-sense seconded his remark, and in a few minutes we had secured our property, and were safely lodged in the Mackworth-Arms.

The whole of this day has been employed in surveying Swansea, and ascertaining some facts relative to its trade and population. Situated at the mouth of the Tawe, (and thence called Aber-tawe in Welsh) in the centre of a deep and secure bay, it possesses such important advantages as have rendered it the most considerable sea-port in the principality. Lofty hills defend it on the north-east and north-west, the Bristol Channel spreads itself in front, bounded by the high cliffs of Somersetshire, and the rich, beautiful, and diversified coast of Glamorganshire shuts it in to the right and left.

The town is large and well-built, containing a population (rapidly increasing) of nearly seven thousand; the houses chiefly modern, handsome, and commodious. Two extensive breweries, a pottery upon Mr. Wedgwood's plan, an iron foundery, two roperies, a fine dry dock, and much ship-building, supply occupation for a great number of workmen. Its trade chiefly consists in the exportation of stone-

coal, culm, iron-ore, and lime-stone, all found on the banks of the Tawe, and brought to Swansea by the canal. Of the first of these articles, about one hundred thousand chaldrons (thirty-six bushels to the chaldron) are annually shipped from this port for foreign markets, as well as home consumption. Seven large copper-houses, also, at small distance from the town, smelting annually forty-five thousand tons of this metal, and consuming seventy thousand chaldrons of coals, find employment for many coasting vessels, which bring ore from Cornwall and Anglesey, and load back with coals and culm. Added to these sources of wealth and importance, Swansea enjoys a part of the Baltic and West-India commerce, which, united with its home trade, have so swelled its commercial consequence as to put it nearly on a level with Bristol, in respect to *tonnage*, and superior to it with regard to the number of vessels that visit its quays. The rapid increase in trade made by this place (notwithstanding the check which war has naturally produced) in the course of a few years, will be best understood by the following view of the number of vessels and *tonnage*, extracted from the custom-house books here:—

| | | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------|--------------|---------|
| In the year 1768 | there entered at Swansea | 694 vessels, | |
| 1794 | 1757 | vessels, | 105,907 |
| 1795 | 1787 | | 112,950 |
| 1796 | 1741 | | 103,560 |
| 1797 | 1897 | | 115,043 |
| 3-fourths of 1798 | 1558 | | 94,704 |

} tons, register
measure.

The beauty of its situation, and its admirable bathing accommodations, have rendered Swansea the resort of many respectable families of South-Wales during the summer season; and an excellent hotel has been erected within these few years, near to the sea-side, for their reception.

Here a fine hard strand stretches away to the south-west, embracing within its sweeping recess the waters of Swansea bay, and commanding the enchanting scenery of the Glamorganshire coast.

Even now, my dear sir, am I returned from pacing this sandy level, and watching, for the last time, the full-orb'd sun slowly sinking into the western wave. The evening, calm and serene; the face of the deep, smooth and tranquil, the distant hills melting into air; and the lingering tints of day fading gradually from the summits of the opposite rocks, formed a picture that irresistibly impelled the mind to serious reflection, and produced a natural question in my bosom, whether the wonders, the

glories, and the beauties of nature, which had so often displayed themselves to us during our tour, had in any degree improved my heart, as well as interested my imagination. Accuse me not of vanity, if I tell you the *answer* was such as gave rise to a *hope* that they have not been altogether unproductive of improvement; that I shall return from an expedition extremely pleasurable, with an increase of humility, an expansion of benevolence, and an enlargement of every better affection; and bid adieu (though with regret) to the shores of Cambria, if not a *wiser*, at least a *better*, man than when I first visited them, with no wish at my heart but the rational aspiration of the poet:—

“ Farewell thy printless sands and pebbly shore!

“ I hear the white surge beat thy coast no more!

“ Pure, gentle source of the high, rapt’rous mood!

— “ Where’er, like the great flood, by thy dread force

“ Propell’d—*shape Thou my calm, my blameless course,*

“ HEAV’N, EARTH, AND OCEAN’S LORD!—AND FATHER

“ OF THE GOOD!”

* The elegant and spirited translation of a passage from Sophocles, (*Χαιρ’ ω πεδον αγχιαλον, &c.*) prefixed to Crowe’s “Lewesdon Hill.”



and the beauties of nature, which had
 then displayed themselves in a dusky
 and in my better judgment, I have
 not of course, if I tell you the
 of gave rise to a law that I have not
 I shall return from an expedition extremely
 variable with an increase of humanity, an
 means of avoidance, and an enlargement
 my better nature; and bid adieu (though
 regret) to the shores of Canada, if not
 my, at least a brave man than when I first
 ed them with no wish at my heart but the
 and separation of the poets—

know by his own sense and feel, that
 bent the whole world but the east no more
 and the cause of the light, rational world
 of the Great God, by the direct force
 together—
 and the world—

The great and useful completion of a power from
 the world—



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